REPRESENTATIVE WOMEN

LADY HESTER STANHOPE

by Martin Armstrong

GENERAL EDITOR · FRANCIS BIRRELL

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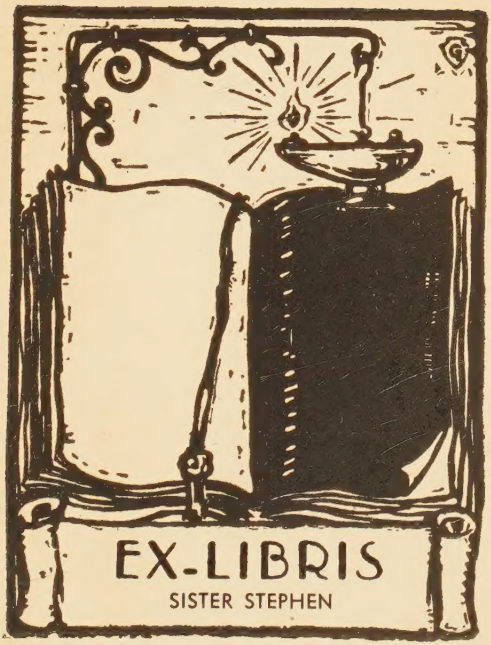

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GENERAL EDITOR: FRANCIS BIRRELL

Lady Hester Stanhope

(1776-1839)

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Lady
Hester
Stanhope

LADY HESTER STANHOPE

by

MARTIN ARMSTRONG

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Note

For a knowledge of the life and character of Lady Hester Stanhope four books are indispensable: the *Memoirs* and the *Travels* by Doctor Charles Meryon, the Duchess of Cleveland's *Life and Letters of Lady Hester Stanhope,* and Frank Hamel's *Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope,* all of them full of valuable material otherwise inaccessible. I am grateful to Lord Rosebery and to Messrs. John Murray for allowing me to quote many passages in the letters of Lady Hester and others from the Duchess of Cleveland's book; and to Frank Hamel for her generous permission to make full use of her work. I am also indebted to Messrs. John Murray for permission to quote from Lord Granville Leveson Gower's Correspondence.

Note

The more important references to Lady Hester occur in:

The Memoirs of Lady Hester Stanhope, as related by herself in Conversations with her Physician. 3 vols. 1845.

The Travels of Lady Hester Stanhope, narrated by her Physician. 3 vols. 1846.

The Life and Letters of Lady Hester Stanhope, by the Duchess of Cleveland. 1914.

Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope, by Frank Hamel. 1913.

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Madden, R. R. Travels in Turkey, Egypt, Nubia, and Palestine. 1829.

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Note

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M. A.

LADY HESTER STANHOPE
(1776-1839)

I

JUST before the French Revolution three little girls, the Ladies Hester, Griselda, and Lucy Stanhope, had been sent with a governess from their home at Chevening, Kent, to the seaside. The French Ambassador, the Comte d'Adhémar, had recently paid a visit to their father, and Hester, the eldest of the little girls, had been deeply impressed by the magnificent footmen with their feathered hats, the fine French manners of the Comte himself, and all the exotic splendours and formalities of the occasion. What sort of place, she wondered, could the country be which produced these marvels? When she applied to her elders, her enquiries produced evasive replies. She would know some day, they told her, when she was grown up. It was always the same; her craving for informa-

tion and experience was always nipped in the bud.

But now as she stood on the beach at Hastings with nothing but the Channel between her and the mysterious country, it seemed unnecessary to postpone the enquiry any longer. An empty boat was conveniently waiting, no one was watching her, and undoing the rope she climbed on board and set off for the continent.

But once again her impulse was checked; the hateful hand of authority closed upon her. For she had not travelled more than a few yards when she was detected and forcibly recalled to England. This was the first and shortest of Lady Hester Stanhope's voyages, and it is typical of her fearless and impulsive pursuit of the unknown. She had traveller's blood in her veins, for the great-grandfather of both her parents was Thomas Pitt—Diamond Pitt, as he was nicknamed—the British East India merchant who from his headquarters at Balasore made trading expeditions into Persia and

was first the formidable rival of the East India Company and later one of its high officials. Her own grandfather was the great Earl of Chatham and William Pitt the younger was her uncle. Her mother, Pitt's favourite sister, died when Lady Hester was only four years old, leaving the three little girls motherless; but six months later their father married again and by his second wife he had three sons.

The girls, whether at Chevening or in London, saw little of their stepmother, and little, too, of their father. Lady Stanhope was absorbed in society. She did not rise till ten and then she immediately went out. Before long, if in town, she returned home to have her hair dressed. There were only two hairdressers in London, both of them Frenchmen, who could dress her hair to her satisfaction; and when this important act had been accomplished Lady Stanhope went out to dinner, and dinner would be followed by the Opera, and the Opera by a party. She usually returned home towards

daybreak. Lucy, the youngest of the three girls, used to say that if she were to meet her stepmother in the street, she would not recognize her.

Lord Stanhope was as busily occupied as his wife, but not with society. His pursuits were scientific and philosophical. Charles, third Earl Stanhope, was educated at Eton and later at Geneva where he studied mathematics and acquired besides, as a contemporary remarked of him, "strong republic, or rather levelling principles, ill adapted to a man whose high birth and prospects should naturally have inspired him with sentiments more favourable to monarchy." He represented High Wycombe in Parliament from 1780 to 1786. He was chairman of the "Revolution Society" which was founded in honour of the Revolution of 1688 and was, besides, in active sympathy with the French Revolution. As author, scientist, and inventor, he gained distinction, and as early as 1772 was elected a Fellow of the Royal

Society. Among his inventions are the printing-press and the lens which bear his name, a device for tuning musical instruments, two calculating machines, and a lightning-conductor, and he made important experiments in steam navigation and electricity. Such was his enthusiasm for the French Revolution that in 1792 he discarded his title, called himself Citizen Stanhope, ordered the coronet to be removed from the family plate and from the iron gates at Chevening, and had the tapestry given to the family by the King of Spain taken down because it was too "damned aristocratical." To the consternation of his wife he even put down his carriages and horses, but Hester, who was the only member of the family who could get round him, wheedled him into keeping at least one carriage, for the use of her stepmother; "but, damn it," he stipulated, "no armorial bearings!"

Hester seems to have been the only one of his children in whom he was interested. "He

would turn to me," she told Dr. Meryon years afterwards, "and say, 'Now we must talk a little philosophy,' and then, with his two legs stuck up on the sides of the grate, he would begin. 'Well, well,' he would say, after I had talked a little, 'that is not bad reasoning, but the basis is bad.' "

"My father," Lady Hester told Meryon, "said I was the best logician he ever saw—I could split a hair. The last time he saw me, he repeated the same words, and said I had but one fault, which was being too fond of royalty."

Being himself simple in dress and mode of life, he sternly checked Hester's love of finery, and if he noticed that any of the girls was wearing a particularly charming hat or dress, he would infallibly have it replaced, next day, by something coarse. As for his own habits and appearance, he was "tall and thin, his countenance expressive of ardour and impetuosity, as were all his movements. Over his whole figure, and even his dress, an air of Puritanism

reminded the beholder of the sectaries of Cromwell rather than a young man of quality in an age of refinement and elegance. He possessed stentorian lungs and a powerful voice, always accompanied with violent gesticulations." So he is described by one who saw him. At the age of twenty-one he caused a sensation by appearing at Court with unpowdered hair, or, as Horace Walpole describes him in a letter to H. S. Conway, "in coal-black hair and a white feather; they said 'he had been *tarred and feathered*' ": and Walpole goes on to assert comically that the young man's father forbade him to powder his hair because of the high price of wheat.

Lord Stanhope had other claims to eccentricity. He slept without a nightcap and with his window open, and in his enthusiasm for manual labour he apprenticed his second son to a blacksmith, put the youngest to work in a shoemaker's shop, and, it is reported, set Lady Hester to tend turkeys on a common. None of

the boys was sent to school. What education they got was from the Reverend Jeremiah Joice, Lord Stanhope's secretary, a man of revolutionary principles and author of many books on education, who was arrested in Lord Stanhope's house on a charge of high treason early one morning in 1794, when, as Lady Hester put it, "he was just blowing his nose as people do the moment before they come down to breakfast."

Lord Stanhope, wrapped in his science and philosophy, paid little attention, except of the disciplinary sort, to his children and the rest of the household, and Lady Hester tells how he "once followed to our door in London a woman who happened to drop her glove, which he picked up. It was our governess; but as he had never seen her in the house, he did not know her in the street."

Such was the curious household in which Lady Hester spent her childhood. Being high-spirited and irrepressible, she rebelled stub-

bornly against all attempts to constrict her mind or body. "I was tired of all those round me," she said to Dr. Meryon when telling the story of her boating adventure at Hastings, "who, to all my questions, invariably answered, 'My dear, that is not proper for you to know'; or, 'You must not talk about such things till you are older,' and the like. So I held my tongue; but I made up for it by treasuring up everything I heard or saw.

"How well I remember what I was made to suffer when I was young! and that's the reason I have sworn eternal warfare against Swiss and French governesses. Nature forms us in a certain manner, both inwardly and outwardly, and it is vain to attempt to alter it. Our governess at Chevening had our backs pinched in by boards that were drawn tight with all the force the maid could use; and as for me, they would have squeezed me to the size of a puny Miss—a thing impossible! My instep, by nature so high that a little kitten could walk under the

sole of my foot, they used to bend down in order to flatten it, although that is one of the things that shews my high breeding. Nature, Doctor, makes us one way, and man is always trying to fashion us in another."

But the life at Chevening was not entirely without its pleasures. The girls danced and rode to hounds. Lady Hester was a fine horsewoman. In one of her boastful reminiscences, years later, she tells of a typical incident. "I remember," she said, "when Colonel Shadwell commanded the district, that one day in a pelting shower of rain he was riding up to Madamscourt Hill as I was crossing at the bottom, going home towards Chevening. I saw Colonel Shadwell's groom's horse about a couple of hundred yards from me, and, struck with its beauty, I turned up the hill, resolving to pass them and get a good look at it. I accordingly quickened my pace, and in going by gave a good look at the horse, then at the groom, then at the master, who was on a sorry nag. The Colonel

eyed me as I passed, and I, taking advantage of a low part in the hedge, put my horse to it, leaped over, and disappeared in an instant."

She was fond, in later years, of narrating incidents, such as this, in which she herself cut a striking figure. One led inevitably to another, and now she went on to an even more dazzling tale. "Nobody ever saw much of me," she told Meryon, "until Lord Romney's review. I was obliged to play a trick on my father to get there. I pretended the day before that I wanted to pay a visit to the Miss Crumps, and then went from their house to Lord Romney's. Though all the gentry of Kent were there, my father never knew, or was supposed not to have known, that I had been there. The King took great notice of me. I dined with him—that is, what was called dining with him, but at an adjoining table. Lord and Lady Romney served the King and Queen, and gentlemen waited on us. . . . I never dined with the King but twice —once at Lord Romney's at an adjoining table,

and afterwards at his own table. . . . When he was going away from Lord Romney's he wanted to put me bodkin between himself and the Queen; and when the Queen had got into the carriage, he said to her, 'My dear, Lady Hester is going to ride bodkin with us. I am going to take her away from Democracy Hall.' But the old Queen observed, in rather a prim manner, that I 'had not got my maid with me, and that it would be inconvenient to go at such a short notice.' So I remained."

Neither Lady Hester nor the other daughters stayed much longer at home, and eventually even Lady Stanhope herself found life there impossible. Lucy, the youngest daughter, a beautiful girl of sixteen, was married to an apothecary at Sevenoaks in 1796. Accounts differ as to whether it was an elopement or a marriage arranged by her democratic father. One by one, the others broke away. Griselda left home the same year and went to live in a cottage at Walmer which was lent to her by her

uncle William Pitt. Four years later she married an officer in the army. At last Lady Hester herself went away to her grandmother. A passage in one of her letters gives a brief but startling glimpse into the terrors of life at home. "The 'Logician' often has said that from the hour I was born I have been a stranger to fear. I certainly felt no fear when he held a knife to my throat—only pity for the arm that held it; but this was a sort of feeling I should rather not again experience. . . ."

The Logician was her nickname for her father.

2

It was in 1800 that Lady Hester at the age of twenty-four went to live with her grandmother, old Lady Chatham, at Burton Pynsent in Somersetshire. She lived there till the summer of 1802. The mother of Kinglake remembered her there, years afterwards, as "the intrepid girl who had been used to break in her friends' vicious horses for them." Her life at Burton Pynsent, judged by surviving letters, was free and happy, varied as it was by visits to town, to Bath, Dawlish, and to her sister Lucy at Bromley. In 1801 she writes cheerfully from Bath, whither she had apparently gone for her health, to Mr. T. J. Jackson, subsequently Minister at Berlin, a friend with whom she conducted a long and lively correspondence. "The Duke of York, Colonels Fitzgerald and

Taylor, the Duchess, Lady Ann Smith, and my old friend and great favourite Cullen (Charles), are arrived. I expect the latter every moment. I wish you were here now. Bath might, perhaps, turn out as pleasant as it did five years ago. My present physician says he hopes I shall be able to go back to Burton in a fortnight, that I must avoid being in town till late in the spring, and till I am perfectly recovered. I have, therefore, taken the determination to divert my thoughts by travelling. I shall stay a short time at Burton, then go into Northamptonshire, and then to Newmarket for the Spring Meeting, which is the first week in April."

But Lady Hester's life was not, during this time, occupied merely by pleasures. Having herself escaped from the imprisonment of home, she was determined to rescue her eldest half-brother, Lord Mahon (afterwards the fourth Earl and father of the historian), who was five years younger than herself. His

father had kept him at home, giving him little or no education, and the poor boy chafed bitterly at his wasted life. When at the age of nineteen he asked to be sent to college, his father refused. Lord Stanhope, it seems, was resolved, in accordance with his republican principles, to get the estate into his own hands and dispose of it. This could be done only when his son had reached his majority and by his consent, and this consent would probably be withheld unless Lord Stanhope managed to retain a complete ascendency over his son. Mahon poured out his troubles to Lady Hester and she threw herself enthusiastically into planning his escape. It was a job after her own heart. She loved mystery and adventures and the concocting of elaborate and minutely detailed plans, and she was, besides, as keen to exercise authority herself as to revolt against that of others. All of these activities, as well as her very real affection for her brother, were brought into play by planning his escape to Erlangen. She threw

herself into the plot with the exuberant energy which, throughout her life, remained one of her most astounding qualities. She enlisted the services of powerful friends, and with their help every detail was provided for—letters of credit, passport, money, information and advice about the journey, a recommendation to Professor Breyer of the University of Erlangen, and an introduction to the Margravine of Brandenburg-Baireuth and, consequently, to the best society of the place. Absolute secrecy was preserved and the plan was a complete success. On March 22nd, 1801, Mahon was enrolled as a student of Erlangen University. Mr. Pitt wrote to Lady Hester expressing his highest approval of all that had been done; old Lady Chatham was delighted. In the following winter the two younger brothers, Charles and James, also escaped. One received a commission in the 25th Foot, and the youngest went to sea.

Mahon remained a year at Erlangen and,

having reached his majority, returned to England, after joining Lady Hester and some friends on a tour in France and Italy. Through Pitt's influence he was made Governor of Dover Castle.

Lady Hester was not entirely pleased with the effects of Mahon's year at Erlangen, which had, it seemed, impaired his submissiveness to his sister; but a letter he wrote after parting from her in Florence restored her esteem for him, at least for a while. "His letter," she wrote, ". . . is a remarkably kind one, in which he begs me to give him my opinion of his conduct without reserve, and send him every instruction I may think necessary. I am pleased with this, as it proves to me he is rather changed since we parted, for he then thought no person's judgment equal to his own." Now to think no person's judgment equal to her own was, throughout her life, the exclusive prerogative of Lady Hester. Those who ventured to think otherwise soon discovered their mistake.

Little else of importance is recorded of the period during which Lady Hester lived with her grandmother at Burton Pynsent, but hints of a certain liveliness occur in letters exchanged during the first half of 1801 by Lady Hester and her faithful correspondent Jackson. "In point of chat," Jackson writes, "we hear only of a few marriages about to be . . . and the last, not the least, Lady Hester Stanhope to Mr. Methuen, junior, of Corsham. You shall have my congratulations, but, upon Lord Lyttelton's plan, when they become due."

And Lady Hester replies: "Thanks for your news. I have been *going* to be married fifty times in my life; and said to have been married half as often, and run away with once. But provided I have my own way, the world may have theirs and welcome."

She must indeed have been very attractive to men, with her energy, her vivaciousness, and her sharp and lively tongue; and, as she herself confessed, it was the society of men that she

preferred. "I am enchanted with everything here," she writes a year later from Walmer. "I have never seen the face of a woman till to-day. Charming!—nothing but pleasant men."

No portrait exists of her as she was in these early years, but she is described by one who saw her in 1804 as "very attractive; so rapid and decided was her conversation, so full of humour and keen observation, and withal so friendly and instructive, that it was quite impossible not to fall at once into her direction, and become her slave, whether for laughter or seriousness. She was certainly not beautiful, but her tall commanding figure, her large dark eyes and variety of expression, changing as rapidly as her conversation, and equally vehement, kept the mind in continual admiration."

In later life, in her garrulous way she described herself, as she was in her youth, to Dr. Meryon. "When I was young, I was never what you call handsome, but brilliant. My

teeth were brilliant, my complexion brilliant, my language—ah! there it was—something striking and original, that caught everybody's attention. I remember, when I was living with Mr. Pitt, that, one morning after a party, he said to me, 'Really, Hester, Lord Hertford' (the father of the late lord, and a man of high pretentions for his courtly manners) 'paid you so many compliments about your looks last night, that you might well be proud of them.' 'Not at all,' answered I: 'he is deceived if he thinks I am handsome, for I know I am not. If you were to take every feature in my face, and put them, one by one, on the table, there is not a single one would bear examination. The only thing is that, put together and lighted up, they look well enough. It is homogeneous ugliness, and nothing more.'" Dr. Meryon quotes another of her descriptions of herself and adds one of his own, a pathetic contrast, which however, in its close observation of detail, provides a more graphic picture than any other. "Doc-

tor," she said to Meryon, "at twenty my complexion was like alabaster, and, at five paces' distance, the sharpest eye could not discover my pearl necklace from my skin; my lips were of such a beautiful carnation, that, without vanity, I can assure you very few women had the like. A dark blue shade under the eyes, and the blue veins that were observable through the transparent skin, heightened the brilliancy of my features. Nor were the roses wanting in my cheeks; and to all this was added a permanency in my looks that fatigue of no sort could impair."

"I am now writing," the Doctor goes on to remark, "when disappointments and sickness have undermined her health, and when she has reached her fifty-fourth year. Her complexion had now assumed a yellow tint, but her hands were still exceedingly fair, and she had the very common though pardonable fault of often contriving to show them. There were moments

when her countenance had still something very beautiful about it. Her mouth manifested an extraordinary degree of sweetness, and her eyes much mildness.

"She never would have her likeness taken, when in the bloom of her beauty, and it is not probable it can be ever done now. . . . Her head, seen in front, presented a perfect oval, of which the eyes would cover a line drawn through the centre. Her eyebrows were arched and fine, I mean slender; her eyes blue, approaching to grey; her nose somewhat large, and the distance from her mouth to the chin rather too long. Her cheeks had a remarkably fine contour, as they rounded off towards the neck; so that Mr. Brummell, as had been related, once said to her in a party, 'For God's sake, do take off those earrings, and let us see what is beneath them.' Her figure was tall (I think not far from six feet), rather largely proportioned, and was once very plump, as I

have heard her say. Her mien was majestic; her address eminently graceful; in her conversation, when she was pleased, she was enchanting; when she meant it, dignified; at all times eloquent. She was excellent at mimicry, and upon all ranks of life. She had more wit and repartee, perhaps, than falls to the lot of most women. Her knowledge of human nature was most profound, and she could turn that knowledge to account to its utmost extent, and in the minutest trifles. She was courageous, morally and physically so; undaunted, and proud as Lucifer."

In September of the year 1802, Lady Hester left England with friends for a tour on the continent. They crossed the Mont Cenis, where Lady Hester, as she wrote to Jackson, chose her own mule and muleteer, "and left the rest of the party to their frights and fears." In October they were in Turin; in November, Florence; in December, Naples, in a whirl of cosmopolitan society including "a great number

of Milords Anglais." Various places in Germany were visited. In April, 1803, old Lady Chatham died and Lady Hester, on arriving back in England the same summer, found herself homeless.

3

BEFORE Lady Hester's return from the continent, Lord Mahon had one day asked his uncle William Pitt: "What is to become of Hester when Lady Chatham dies?" and Pitt, after a moment's silence, had replied: "Under no circumstances could I offer her a home in my own house." Nor is it to be wondered at that he should regard with some alarm the invasion of his bachelor establishment by his high-spirited and uncontrollable niece.

Yet, now that the emergency was actually present, his kindness of heart, which had so often come to the rescue of Lady Hester and her sisters and brothers, at once outweighed his fears and he invited her to make his house her home. She was by this time twenty-seven. "With considerable personal attractions, the

Lady Hester of 1803 combined a lively flow of conversation and an inborn quickness of discernment. Her wit was certainly even then far too satirical and too little under control. She made even then many enemies, but she also made many friends. Mr. Pitt was on some occasions much discomposed by her sprightly sallies, which did not always spare his own Cabinet colleagues. But on the whole her young presence proved to be, as it were, a light in his dwelling. It gave it that charm which only a female presence can give. It tended, I believe, far more than his return to power, to cheer and brighten his few—too few—remaining years."

In November, Lady Hester, now established with Pitt at Walmer Castle, writes to her old friend T. J. Jackson, at this time Minister at Berlin:

"To express the kindness with which Mr. Pitt welcomed my return, and proposed my living with him would be impossible, one would really suppose that all obligation was on his

side. Here, then, am I, happy to a degree; exactly in the sort of society I most like. There are generally three or four men staying in the house, and we dine eight or ten almost every other day. Military and naval characters are constantly *welcome* here; women are not, *I suppose,* because they do not form any part of our society. You may guess, then, what a pretty fuss they make with me."

All along the south coast, in these days, the threatened French invasion had roused a great bustle of preparation. Pitt himself had raised a volunteer regiment. One of Lady Hester's letters gives a lively account of an inspection of the first battalion by General Dundas. "Mr. Pitt," she writes in another, "absolutely goes through the fatigue of a *drill-sergeant.* It is parade after parade, at fifteen or twenty miles distant from each other. I often attend him, and it is quite as much (I can assure you) as I am equal to, although I am *remarkably* well just now. The hard riding I do not mind, but

to remain almost *still* so many hours on horseback is an incomprehensible bore, and requires more patience than you can easily imagine. . . . Mr. Pitt is determined to remain acting Colonel when his regiment is called into the field. Some persons blame this determination, but I do not. He has always hitherto acted up to his character. Why should he, then, in this instance, prove deficient?"

Two months later, in January, 1804, she writes: "We are in almost daily expectation of the coming of the French, and Mr. Pitt's regiment is now nearly *perfect* enough to receive them. We have the famous 15th Light Dragoons in our barracks; also the Northampton and Berkshire Militia. The first and last of these I command, and have an orderly dragoon whenever I please from the former, and the band of the latter."

In such surroundings Lady Hester was in her element. The planning and ordering the inspection of troops, the society of officers and

the polite convention of her command of the 15th Light Dragoons and the Berkshire Militia gave full scope to her boundless energy and her love of exercising authority and receiving obsequious admiration.

Within a few weeks she and Pitt are in town, at York Place or at Pitt's country house at Putney, and she spends some days with Canning. In May Pitt became for the second time Prime Minister and Lady Hester found herself at once in a position of great power and social importance.

But it was not only politics and society which occupied her mind at this time. Discreet hints in some of her letters and franker statements in certain letters written by the Countess of Bessborough to Lord Granville Leveson Gower, tell of more intimate matters. In July, 1804, Lady Bessborough writes: "I have very good reason to believe Lady Hester has taken a strong fancy to you and imagin'd you return'd it, and had serious intentions—so much

so as to have mentioned it to Pitt. This subsiding on your part is, I really believe, the cause of her low spirits. Do not say *O bosh* to this, for I am not talking en l'air, but on very good grounds."

In September she enquires if Lord Granville has seen the paragraph announcing his marriage to Lady Hester, and her next letter contains a rebuke and a warning. "Is it quite honourable, dear G., to encourage a passion you do not mean seriously to return? and which, if you do not, must make the owner of it miserable? And how can you be certain of what lengths you or she may be drawn into? We know she has strong passions and indulges them with great latitude; may you not both of you be hurried further than you intend? If Mr. Pitt knew even what has passed already, do you think he would like it?"

Shortly after this, Lady Bessborough met Lady Hester who told her that she had made up her mind to avoid everything that could re-

mind her of Lord Granville, never to speak of him, ask after him, or even, if possible, think of him. But such a resolve was more easily made than kept, and it is clear that she suffered severely. "Last spring and part of this summer," she writes sadly from Walmer in February, 1805, "I bore in the great world much more than my value, for talents, looks, etc., everything was overrated, and although I was perfectly aware of it at the time, *then,* I own, I enjoyed it; now if I could command it, it would be indifferent to me. But my looks are gone (as they always do with the absence of health) and I have been recommended to come into the country to regain them; and here I have been three weeks. To be near my sister-in-law was a good excuse to leave town, *they* (Mahon and her) see I am not well or as gay as usual, but do not understand why."

A month before this, Lady Stafford, Lord Granville's mother, had met her. "I was sadly

disappointed the other day," she writes to her son, "when I saw Ly. Hester Stanhope with Susan. I had figured her to myself as very pretty, in Place of which she look'd like a middle aged married Woman with a dingey Complexion, no Rouge, a broad Face, and an unbecoming fur cap."

The truth will perhaps never be known, but evidently there was much mystery and much talk about Lady Hester during these months. Lady Bessborough is sometimes vague and mysterious, sometimes frankly scandalous, and Lord Granville, replying from Russia, speaks mysteriously of a letter from Lady Hester. "She (with great generosity, I think) exculpates me from everything like Blame with respect to 3 Events the communication of which gave you so much uneasiness."

"Hetty is still at Walmer," writes Lady Bessborough in March, "where she has been very ill and confin'd to her room for some time.

I wonder whether my fears were justified. . . . She publishes everywhere your having completely jilted her. I always fear'd this."

By way of discretion Lady Bessborough frequently employed a code of false names in this correspondence. Lord Granville himself becomes "Mr. Arundel," Lord Borington, "the Don," and Canning, "the Pope." "The Don," she writes two months later, "told me *he knew* as a fact that Hetty took poison on Mr. Arundel's going out of England, but that by being sick it only made her ill without killing her. If this is so, it explains the note she wrote Mr. A. just as he was setting out and her saying, 'Never mind me; you shall see what I will do.' "

Another letter speaks openly of a scandal. "My Sis. and all her family returned home from a ball last night full of Hetty and the story of the accouchement which they insist upon she affichés—that is, she goes out without rouge, much fairer than she was, and so languid and faint that she did faint at Mad. Du-

pré's. I wonder what all this means. I should not have a doubt after the letter I saw, only you say nothing of it."

Whether or not these particulars are mere groundless scandal, it is clear that Lady Hester's brilliant career as the Prime Minister's hostess and much-loved companion was clouded by disappointment and pain. She had retired to Walmer, ill and unhappy, feeling no doubt that it would be easier there to regain something of her old health and peace of mind. But, though she was confined to the house, her tireless energy could not rest. "I am not dull," she writes, "or rather, not idle, as I have the charge of improvements here—plantations, farms, buildings, etc. The grave and the gay Generals pay me all due respect and attention, and so would all the garrison if I would allow them; but as I did not come down here to be gay, I dispense with their civility and society"; and many years afterwards she described to Dr. Meryon how she had heard Pitt remark that

Walmer might be a beautiful residence, but for its lack of trees, and how, taking the opportunity of his absence, she had got troops from Dover and set about turning "a frightful, barren bit of ground behind the castle" into a garden. And so the place swarmed with soldiers, levelling the ground, laying turf, planting out trees, shrubs, and flowers, calling into existence the garden which she herself had planned in an antique style which should be in keeping with the castle. By this time she was once more allowed out-of-doors and she walked about supervising the work and dropping a pleasant word to one after another of the busy soldiers. As a result, the work was carried out so rapidly that it was finished before Pitt's return.

"When Mr. Pitt came down, he dismounted from his horse, and, ascending the staircase, saw through a window, which commanded a view of the grounds, the improvements that had been made. 'Dear me, Hester, why this is

a miracle! I know 'tis you, so do not deny it; well, I declare, it is quite admirable; I could not have done it half so well myself.' And, though it was just dinner-time he would go out, and examine it all over, and then was so profuse in his praises!—which were the more delightful, because they applauded the correctness of my taste."

None of her letters remain to tell how she occupied herself during the rest of this year; but, in the beginning of the next, we catch a brief glimpse of her, restored, it seems, to something of her old brilliance, at the official celebration of Queen Charlotte's birthday. An account in *The Lady's Magazine* of the dresses worn upon the occasion notes that: "Lady Hester Stanhope was, as usual, dressed with much taste and elegance, in black and green velvet ornamented with embossed gold, and studded with rubies, which had a most brilliant effect. Headdress, feathers and diamonds."

But, happy or unhappy, Lady Hester's

career as a great lady was doomed to be brief. It ended abruptly on the 23rd of January, 1806. On that day William Pitt died and she lost the truest friend she ever had.

A letter of Canning's gives a touching account of her grief. "Her conduct towards Pitt has been exemplary. Her sufferings during the last period of his illness were extreme—and had she not, the last night, found her way to his bedside, against the express but very mistaken caution of the physicians, and secured his blessing, I fear her grief would have affected her brain. Up to that moment she had not shed a tear, but seemed stunned and stupefied. When he recognized her and thanked her for her kindness, she burst into a flood of tears; and when he had said, 'God bless you!' she came away so much relieved that you would almost have thought she had brought away the news of his getting better."

When she had left the room, Pitt enquired if she was still there. "Dear soul," he mur-

mured several times, "I know she loves me."

At his death she was again dry-eyed, too stunned to weep. "I never shed a tear," she told Meryon, "until one day Lord Melville came to see me; and the sight of his eyebrows, turned grey, and his changed face made me burst into tears. I felt much better for it after it was over."

4

ONCE more Lady Hester found herself homeless and, but for the forethought of her uncle, might, besides, have found herself almost penniless. But Pitt on his deathbed expressed a wish that a pension of £1,000 or £1,200 per annum might be settled on her and that her sisters too might be provided for. "I am far from saying," he had explained, "that my public services have earned it, but still I hope my wish may be complied with." Parliament granted a pension of £1,200 to Lady Hester and of £600 to each of her sisters.

But, for Lady Hester, the death of her adored uncle was nothing less than disaster. Not only did she lose, in him, one who was more than a father to her, the man whom, more than any other in her life, she admired

and respected; with him went also her home, the great position which, as the social partner of the Prime Minister, was hers and suited her so admirably, and the influence and authority which alone could satisfy her proud and autocratic spirit. Now she was alone, and, though comfortably off, without the means to keep up a style which had grown to be a very part of her existence. For a while she stayed with her relative Lord Harrington; but it is easy to realize that with no one on whom either to lavish her affectionate care, as she had lavished it on Pitt, or to exercise her authority, life seemed to her empty and meaningless. She cast about in her mind for some new focus, something that should again absorb her tireless energies, and soon she had resolved to make a home in London for her two younger brothers.

She bought a house in Montagu Square and again took up social life. But it was, as she soon discovered, a very different life from the one which had ended so abruptly with the death

of Pitt. A temperament such as hers was incapable of adapting itself to her changed conditions. For she now was no longer unique, the centre of a small but very important world, no longer consulted and flattered and applauded. She had become merely an individual in a large society, and she resented the change bitterly. It seemed to her that her friends were cold and callous. Those in authority, when she advised and dictated to them now, no longer listened to her as they had done when she was the companion of Pitt. Perhaps, too, that "latitude," as Lady Bessborough styled it, with which she was accustomed to indulge her passions, was no longer winked at as it had been when she was a great lady. Her pride was deeply wounded. "She had not, perhaps, till then," writes the Duchess of Cleveland, her niece, "fully realized the alteration in her position, nor anticipated its inevitable result, and she was bitterly mortified and disappointed. She had been accustomed to queen it in society, to be courted,

consulted, and applauded, and she could not endure to find herself now of little or no account. She felt this supposed neglect acutely and resented it as an unmerited humiliation. Her pride rose up in arms; she became irritable, suspicious of slights, and ready both to give and take offence, discarding some of her friends and alienating others at the very time when she most needed and claimed their support." She had already quarrelled with her eldest brother Lord Mahon.

Little is known of her life at this time. According to Lady Bessborough she became engaged to the Honourable William Noel Hill, second son of Lord Berwick, with whom it had been rumoured she had been in love before the episode of Lord Granville Leveson Gower. "Ly. Hol[d]." (Lady Holland) "told me yesterday as *certain*," wrote Lady Bessborough, "that Hetty's marriage with Mr. Hill is *declared* and to take place immediately; can this be so? If it is, il est bien bon. God

bless you. I wish it may be true, for I sincerely wish poor Hetty to be well and comfortably settled."

By the following year the gossip has changed. Lady Bessborough meets Mr. Hill at a party at Lady Cowper's. "He always contrives," she reports, "to raise my curiosity about two people who, tho' far remov'd from my ken, in a different way always interest me —Hetty and the Pope." The Pope, in this correspondence, is Canning. "He is there not only all day, but almost all night. Mr. Hill says she must have some strong occupation. At present he, the Pope, is le régnant."

Such was the new gossip, and gossip, whether true or false, has its relevance in the study of human characters and their times. In the present case it must not be forgotten that Lady Hester's close connexion with Canning, through Pitt, is quite enough to account for their continued intimacy after his death, and that, in default of more conclusive evidence, there are

no grounds for assuming that it was not entirely irreproachable, though malicious tongues would certainly make use of it. In any case, Lady Hester had, before long, quarrelled with Canning, declaring him a traitor to Pitt's memory, and the intimacy had ceased.

In earlier days she had shared Pitt's admiration for Sir John Moore, and now this admiration had grown into a warm attachment. In 1808 Moore was sent as Commander-in-Chief to Portugal and Spain to help the Spanish against the French. Charles, one of Lady Hester's two younger brothers, went with him as his Aide-de-Camp, and James, the youngest, who had transferred from the Navy to the Army, soon afterwards went out in a like capacity. Lady Hester was left alone in the house in Montagu Square.

During this time, she and Moore kept up a close correspondence. "I wish you were with us," he writes from Lisbon in October, 1808. "The climate now is charming; we should give

you riding enough, and in your red habit, à l'Amazone, you would animate and do us all much good."

On November the 23rd he writes from Salamanca: "Farewell, my dear Lady Hester. If I extricate myself and those with me from our present difficulties, and if I can beat the French, I shall return to you with satisfaction; but if not, it will be better I shall never quit Spain." Two months later he died at Corunna. Young James Stanhope stood by his bed when he died, and it was to him that Moore's last words were spoken: "Stanhope, remember me to your sister!"

Soon after receiving the terrible news, Lady Hester heard that her brother Charles had been shot through the heart almost at the same time that Moore was fatally wounded. She writes to a friend from Montagu Square, speaking of her loss and telling of Moore's dying message to her. "You may wonder I can tell you all this," she writes; "but grief has its

peculiarities, and thinking of nothing else but those I have lost, I like to talk of them. . . ."

It was as if Fate was cynically resolved to subdue the poor woman's spirit to the uttermost. Once already her life had been almost wrecked. The man she had set her heart on had not returned her love; Pitt, whom she had loved and venerated, had died when she had been his companion for hardly more than two years; the power and eminence for which her nature cried out had been snatched from her almost as soon as it was gained. And now, when she had bravely tried to rebuild the wreckage of her life, it had been shattered a second time; her new love had been torn from her before its fulfilment, and she had been robbed again of all scope for those qualities, good and bad, through which alone she could find self-expression. Her life, it seemed, was now deprived of all, or almost all, its motive force. She could no longer bear to remain in London. Except for James, who had come

safe through the battle in which his brother and Moore had been killed, she was alone; and remembering a lonely farm to which she had taken a fancy when visiting Wales the year before, she determined to take refuge there in the hope of regaining something of her lost health and spirits.

In April, 1809, she wrote to the Rev. Rice Price with whom she had made friends on her previous visit, asking him to approach the widow at the farm, whose name also as it happened was Price, with a view to her becoming her tenant for the summer months. She enclosed a paper stating her requirements:

"I want the parlour, the little room above it for my bedroom, and the little room next for a dressing-room; a door to be made near the window to communicate with the bedroom. The room over the kitchen for my maids, and a bed, in the loft or elsewhere, for a boy. The parlour must have tidy rush chairs or wooden ones, and be carpeted all over with green baize,

or coarse grey cloth, like soldiers' great-coats, a table to dine on, a fly-table, and shelves for books. The bedroom must have two chairs, a table—no bed as I shall bring down a camp bed and furniture complete. Bedside carpets I shall expect to find, and a chest of drawers. The dressing-room must have two chairs, and a table with a looking-glass, two wash-hand basins, two water jugs, one large stone pitcher for water, two large tumbler glasses, and two large cups for soap, a tin kettle for warm water, and a little strip of carpet before the table. . . . I shall want no attendance from any part of the family."

In letter after letter there follows a flood of further minute instructions. Nothing is forgotten. Food of all sorts, meat and dairy produce, is arranged for. "I have made no bargain about garden-stuff," she writes, "but, if Mrs. Price and I agree, I intend to send her down directly some very valuable seeds of various vegetables and flowers, to improve her

garden, and then she will let me have part of the produce gratis. If her rooms are not already painted I shall also beg her acceptance of a small packet of paint which has no smell, and which is of a beautiful green, pale and yet lively." Another letter follows: "I have just recollected that I ought to have sent down some white paint for the window-shutters, skirting board if there is one, and door of the parlour; otherwise, as every thing will be new and clean, it is but too probable Mrs. Price will set about painting them with paint which may smell shockingly, and make me sick for two months. I therefore send the quantity of white paint I think will be sufficient to do the work complete."

"I forget," she writes again, "if Mrs. Price's house is brick-colour or white, but I should advise her washing over the front white at all events, it gives such a neatness to a place, and green will set it off very much. P.S. I beg no flourishes may be put on the green paint,

like the parlour at . . . ; it must be left quite plain and no border at all."

Minute instructions are sent of how Mrs. Price is to lay a carpet: "the door will open over it if put very smooth, and she must then nail it down with nails about a foot apart." When the flowers for the garden arrive, she orders that "they must be well watered if the weather continues dry."

There we see Lady Hester revealed in all her prodigious and garrulous energy. There is something terrifying in the feverish restlessness of mind, so undeniably practical yet so appallingly supererogative, that could take thought for the smallest trifle and never for a moment trust to the foresight of others. And this energy never, throughout her life, slackened; never allowed her a moment's respite. From first to last it rode her like a frenzied devil, spurring her on to torment herself and all those who came in contact with her.

She took a coach with her into Wales, "which

she kept at the Royal Oak in readiness for particular occasions, and had a lighter carriage—better adapted for country roads—with her at Glan Irfon, where she also kept two saddle-horses and a cow. The latter was named Pretty-Face, and Lady Hester amused herself with managing this favourite's dairy produce. She successfully skimmed the milk, churned the cream, and washed the butter with her own hands, but she never attempted to make cheese."

In Wales, as everywhere else, she was always the great lady. "She was very compassionate and bountiful to the poor, and, besides medicine and money, gave away among them great quantities of dark striped flannel, of the coarse grey cloth made by the neighbouring weavers."

The beautiful place, mountainous and lonely, the kindly people about her, her long rides on horseback, and the simplicity of her new life did much to soothe her pain. She remained at

Glan Irfon the whole summer and for some part of the time her brother James was with her. When at last the time came for her to leave and she returned to town, the London life seemed to her more than ever impossible. She could not reconcile herself to insignificance. Everything in the political world, in which she no longer had any part, was, for her, evil and hateful. Of her friends, some had grown cold, others she had alienated, with others she had lost touch. Her young brother was soon to rejoin his regiment in Spain. She would be left alone in the house in Montagu Square, a lonely, unhappy, embittered woman, her insatiable energies unoccupied, her life, at the age of thirty-three, already at an end. She determined to give up the house, accompany her brother as far as Gibraltar, and then travel on the continent.

In February, 1810, she left England, never to return.

5

It was on February 10th, 1810, that Lady Hester embarked at Portsmouth on the frigate Jason which was convoying a fleet of transports and merchant-ships to Gibraltar. Then and there, a month before she was to enter on her thirty-fifth year, her life as an Englishwoman in England ended. And if at that moment life had ended for her altogether, her death could hardly have been called untimely. For her story, ended at that point, would have had is own completeness, the completeness of a logical, consistent, and tragic unfulfilment. Her temperament was, by the irony of Fate, of the kind that inexorably frustrates the realization of its desires. With all her brilliant qualities — her tireless energy, her extraordinary attractiveness, her powers of organi-

zation which would provide for the smallest detail, her unshakable courage, her flashes of intuitive wisdom; with her maternal instinct that sought restlessly for something to mother, and her life-long craving for love, she failed, to the end, to secure power, maternity, or the love of man. The energy and magnetism which brought power easily within her grasp were fatally tainted; for she had little serenity and there was a fever in the energy which could neither rest nor delegate command. She would fritter away on the most trival details as much strength as she brought to bear on the most vital issues, and she used the magnetism which drew men to her, to hold them unwillingly but unescapably. Her longing to mother and befriend was vitiated by a tyranny that claimed absolute subjection from the creature of her choice. She lacked the humility and self-abandonment without which true love is impossible; for true love asks nothing and gives all. Lady Hester's love, one feels, though it

had much to give, exacted more, much more, than it gave. Her violent passions were too much the passion of hunger. Serenity in love, as in all else, seems to have been impossible with her. "She must have some strong occupation," Hill had said to Lady Bessborough significantly. Lady Hester asked much of life, and when that much was given her it was more than she could control. Despite her extraordinary powers of enterprise and endurance, she lacked the ultimate self-knowledge and self-discipline which alone would have enabled her to use and enjoy these gifts. In this lies the tragedy of her amazing existence.

For now, on the close of her life in England, there opens for her another life, so strange, so remote from normal experience, that it reads like a figment of the romantic imagination.

Her intention, on leaving England, seems to have been to settle for a while in Sicily, and as her health was far from good she engaged

a physician, Dr. Charles Meryon, to accompany her. He it was who wrote the three volumes of Memoirs and the three of Travels in which is recorded almost all that is known of Lady Hester's strange life in the East.

Besides her brother James, she was accompanied as far as Gibraltar by a Mr. Nassau Sutton, a friend from the old days at Walmer, for he had been an officer in Pitt's second volunteer battalion. Lady Hester and he, it is obvious from her letters to him, were on intimate terms. When she was in Wales she invited him to stay with her; and now, knowing that he was in ill-health, she had commandeered him in her high-handed way, arranged every detail for his departure, and carried him off on the frigate Jason.

Their voyage alternated between calm weather and violent gales. It was a month before they reached Gibraltar, where Lady Hester and her brother stayed with the Governor.

But she was anxious to push on. To find herself drawn again into the social life from which she had broken away troubled her acutely. Within a month she had arranged a passage on the frigate Cerberus, bound for Malta. Her brother had joined his regiment at Cadiz; Nassau Sutton had left for Minorca and was to join them later at Messina. Sutton, however, does not reappear in the story; perhaps he preferred not again to incur the tyranny of Lady Hester's solicitude.

Yet when Lady Hester sailed from Gibraltar she was not without company. She had made the acquaintance there of two young men, the Marquis of Sligo who was yachting in the Mediterranean, and Michael Crawford Bruce, a youth of twenty, who was doing the grand tour. They struck up a friendship and soon Bruce had fallen in love with this woman fourteen years his senior. He accompanied her in the Cerberus to Malta. After a week in Malta Lady Hester had "contrived to affront

almost all the women in the place," as Meryon tells in a letter. "She has the most thorough contempt for her sex," he writes, "at least, that part of it who converse on nothing but visits, caps, and bonnets, and such frivolous subjects. Hence it is that the moment she discovers one to be of that class, and her knowledge of mankind very soon puts her in possession of a person's character, she seldom fails to manifest her disgust and to give rise to as much disgust as she feels. She accepts no invitations except from General Oakes." The General was Governor of Malta, and he and Lady Hester struck up a lasting friendship. Her letters to him, written in the following years, reveal all that was best in her.

Hobhouse, Byron's friend, met her at this time. "I met Mr. Bruce and Lady Hester Stanhope," he wrote, "a masculine woman, who says she would as soon live with packhorses as with women. I met her again the next day at dinner. She seems to me a violent,

peremptory person. We went together to the Opera."

During the stay at Malta a quarrel broke out between the two young men who were Lady Hester's amateur and professional dependents. Meryon had already become one of her captives. Whether he loved her or not, he was obviously fascinated by her, and he remained so, in spite of periodic escapes from her, for the rest of his life. Now he became keenly aware of his subordinate position in the presence of the attractive young Bruce whom Lady Hester treated as her friend and equal. He believed that Bruce was using his influence to exclude him from the privileges which, though his position gave him no title to them, Lady Hester had hitherto allowed him. His pride, and perhaps his affections, were deeply wounded.

A country house belonging to the Governor became vacant and General Oakes persuaded Lady Hester to move into it. "Mr. Bruce,"

writes Meryon, "is one of us at St. Antonio, and although his age, his person, and his known gallantry would be enough to make the tongue of scandal wag against any other woman who, unmarried and in her prime, should trust herself with a single man in a large house, and in the country, yet Lady Hester contrives to do anything that others could not, without incurring the same blame as they would. Besides, she is mended in her health considerably of late, and really begins to look rather winning. . . ."

"Bruce," he wrote again, "is handsome enough to move any lady's heart that is not, like my poor patient, too much a valetudinarian to find a moment for love. . . . I don't like Mr. Bruce."

The quarrel between the two young men was patched up before, at the beginning of August, the party left Malta, bound, not as they had at first decided, for Sicily, but for Constantinople.

Lady Hester was bent on an extraordinary enterprise. "You must have heard Lady Hester talk as I have done," wrote Meryon, "to believe she can entertain any such project as what I am now going to mention. She intends, at Constantinople, to make friends with the French ambassador, and through his means to obtain a passport to travel through France. Protected by this she will set off from Turkey, proceed through Hungary, Germany, and arrive at Paris. When there she means to get into Buonaparte's good graces, study his character, and then sail for England to plot schemes for the subversion of his plans. Her wonderful mind is equal to the accomplishment of all this, if she can but overcome the first difficulty of entering a hostile country."

From Malta they sailed to Zante and thence to Patras, and from there they reached Corinth in an open boat. The company had now grown larger. "Our party consists, as before," wrote Meryon, "of Mr. Bruce, Lady Hester, and

myself, one French, one German, one Persian, and two Greek servants, with a Janissary to save us from insults, to procure post horses, and to bastinado the poor devils of Greeks whenever they do not resign all their comforts for our own accommodation."

At Corinth Lord Sligo rejoined them and after a brief rest they rode to Kenkri to board his yacht. They must have formed an impressive company. "First goes the guide, next Lord Sligo's two Albanians, dressed in magnificent clothes in the fashion of their country, with each a brace of silver-stocked pistols and a silver-hilted dagger at his girdle. Then come the dragoman. . . . Mr. Bruce's and Lady Hester's two Turkish servants, our cook, who is a Persian, two Greeks, who serve to point out the curiosities, and Lord Sligo's cook, a Turk. Each of these has a sabre and a brace of pistols. Lord Sligo, Lady Hester, Mr. Bruce, and Lord Sligo's painter (to take views of the country, of antiques, etc.) form the

centre of the procession, and last of all Lord Sligo's three servants in livery, armed with blunderbusses and sabres, with Mr. Bruce's and Lady Hester's valets following; and the whole is closed by the packhorses with the baggage."

From Kenkri they sailed to Athens. As they entered the Piræus a man dived from the mole-head. It is hardly necessary to say that it was Lord Byron. He was invited to dress and join them, and during Lady Hester's stay in Athens he was one of the small company who met at her house every evening. Their opinions of each other are amusing.

"I have seen too little of the lady," Byron wrote to Hobhouse, "to form any decisive opinion, but I have discovered nothing different from other she-things, expect a great disregard of received notions in her conversation as well as conduct. I don't know whether this will recommend her to our sex, but I'm sure it won't to her own."

"I think he was a strange character," said Lady Hester, recalling him many years later, "his generosity was for a motive, his avarice for a motive; one time he was mopish, and nobody was to speak to him; another he was for being jocular with everybody. Then he was a sort of Don Quixote, fighting with the police for a woman of the town; and then he wanted to make himself something great. But when he allowed himself to be bullied by the Albanians it was all over with him; you must not show any fear with them. At Athens I saw nothing in him but a well-bred man, like many others; for, as for poetry, it is easy enough to write verses; and as for the thoughts, who knows where he got them? . . . He had a great deal of vice in his looks—his eyes set close together and a contracted brow—so" (imitating it). "Oh, Lord! I am sure he was not a liberal man, whatever else he might be. The only good thing about his looks was this part"

(drawing her hand under the cheek down the front of her neck), "and the curl on his forehead."

From Athens they sailed in October for Constantinople in a Greek polacca. The wind increased to such a pitch that they were forced to anchor for a whole day under the promontory of Sunium. As they passed the Cyclades a quarrel broke out between the crew and the servants, which became so serious that the travellers had to sleep on their arms. On October 24th they entered the Hellespont and in the evening found themselves in the Sea of Marmora. That night a storm broke, and the Captain and the crew showed themselves so alarmingly incompetent that when the ship reached Erakli, on the Gulf of Rhodosto, the party decided to leave the ship. Here they were lodged in a Greek monastery and Bruce and Lord Sligo set off the same evening for Constantinople.

Five days later they returned with a Turkish

officer who carried a firman authorizing all the proper facilities for Lady Hester's progress to the city. They approached it by water in two galleys, "as clean, as trim, and as richly gilded as a nobleman's barge on the Thames . . . elevated at the stern and the stem, and sharp at both ends." From the harbour stairs Lady Hester rode in a sedan-chair and the rest walked, a huge lantern borne before them, to Pera where quarters had been hastily prepared for them.

6

THEY spent the first few days in looking about them. They watched the gorgeous procession of the Sultan's sabbath visit to the mosque, and on one of such occasions Lady Hester rode on horseback on a side-saddle. "There is probably no other example," says Meryon, "of a European female having ridden through the streets of Constantinople in this manner on that day; and it may be reckoned as a proof of her courage that she did so, and of her conduct that she did so without insult."

Before long, lady Hester, oppressed by the confined spaces of the city, took a house at Therapia, and later at Bebec, on the Bosphorus, some miles away. English people from Constantinople came to visit her there, including Stratford Canning (afterwards Viscount

Stratford de Redcliffe), Minister to the Sublime Porte. Lord Sligo left them and returned on business to Malta, carrying with him important news for the Governor, Lady Hester's old friend General Oakes.

The news, it seems, was that she had accepted Bruce as a lover after having refused him as a husband. She believed that he had a brilliant career before him and that a wife so much older than himself would be a serious disadvantage. "What can I say, my dear Lady Hester," the General writes in reply, "as to the very important and interesting communication which Lord Sligo has made to me respecting yourself, and for which your letter of the 22nd ultimo paved the way? It was, as you may easily imagine, a very great surprise to me, and the circumstance is what I cannot do otherwise than greatly deplore, for viewing it in every way and well aware of the prejudices of the world, I fear it must hereafter cause both you and Bruce much trouble and distress.

I can, however, assure you I make every allowance. I shall be very glad to be of service to you in any way you can point out, and I shall, believe me, have a sincere satisfaction if I am at all the instrument for promoting your comfort and happiness.

"At this distance, and without knowing a great deal more than I do at present, it is quite impossible for me to give any advice or opinion that ought in the smallest degree to have weight; yet, from all Lord Sligo has told me, I will so far venture my sentiments as to say that I am rather inclined to take Bruce's side of the question for ameliorating the difficulties and evils which must, I fear, from the general usage and customs of the world, and of our country in particular, be naturally produced by such an event as has occurred.

"Lord Sligo has told me the object of his intended visit to Cadiz. It is certainly very kind of him to undertake the task, and I most earnestly hope he may succeed in curbing your

brother's impetuosity, and reducing him to reason; this, however, will naturally require some art, and possibly a considerable degree of temper and patience."

It is impossible not to admire the generosity and courage shown in Lady Hester's reply. "Unless," she writes, "I could communicate to you the unfortunate history of my life, I have no sort of defence to make for that conduct which surprised you; all I can say is, had I acted *differently* I should have had to reproach myself, and altogether give up a person whose attachment appeared to me as extraordinary as I have since found it uniform and sincere. I fairly tell you I had not courage to do so. I know how to make the best of my situation, and have sense and feeling enough never to wish to force myself forward so as to make it at all awkward to him; all the society I want is that which, if I had been *nobody,* I could equally have enjoyed—a few of his men friends, and those of my own, who this or any

imprudence would not have deprived me of; yet I never wish them to commit themselves, particularly those in a public situation, which was one of my reasons for having candidly mentioned this business to you; but at any time when you might hear me abused, you might be tempted to take my part, or that, in the event of my again passing Malta, you might be prepared to act toward me as you should think most becoming your situation, and which I never could take ill, knowing, at least flattering myself, that from your heart you can never act unkindly towards me."

Before long, the news had found its way to England. "I hear," wrote "Monk" Lewis to Lady Charlotte Bury, "that Lady [Hester Stanhope] is living at Constantinople with young B[ruce], avowedly as his *chère amie,* and that she says nobody was ever so handsome, nor so clever, and that he is in short, and *is to be,* one of the first characters in these

kingdoms. I wish him joy of his conquest, and had rather *he* than *I*."

Another letter from Lady Hester about this time tells of her progress with the Turks. "I have made my own way with the Turks," she writes, "and I have contrived to get upon so intimate a footing, that the Pasha's brother, brother-in-law, and captain of the fleet, dined with us, accompanied by the confidential physician. This may not sound like a compliment; but see the Captain Pasha's brother sitting under a tree in a public walk; he neither notices Greek, Armenian, or Frank women of any kind, but looks at them all as if they were sheep in a field; and they dare not come near him, as his attendants form a circle which they never pass, but stand and look at him for an hour together. I must likewise tell you that Canning has been much shocked at my having gone on board the fleet in men's clothes; a pair of overalls, a military great-coat, and

cocked hat is so much less decent a dress than that of a real fine lady in her shift and gown, and half naked besides!"

While at Constantinople, Lady Hester attempted to realize her scheme to go to France. She succeeded in conveying her wishes to the French chargé d'affaires. "As the business required much talking over, it was necessary they should see each other. Mr. Maubourg could not violate the orders of his Court, which probably positively forbid him to associate with the English, and Lady Hester did not wish to disoblige our Minister by being seen with Mr. Maubourg. They accordingly met secretly on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, and had repeated their meetings three or four times, when Mr. Canning's spy, by accident, discovered it, and gave information to his employer. In the meantime her Ladyship's plan went on admirably, so that she hopes soon to have her passports for the South of France. But the discovery that had been made created

a most dreadful quarrel. Down came Mr. Canning to Bebec, and after a conference of half an hour with her Ladyship, departed in high dudgeon. Orders were issued that the English palace was to be shut against Lady Hester's suite, and all the secretaries, dragomen, etc., of the mission were commanded to hold no intercourse with us."

Lady Hester was furious at Canning's very proper indignation and, arbitrary and petulant as usual when her whims were thwarted, she vented her fury in the most ill-natured recriminations. "He is a bigot and an idiot, in all these sort of affairs," she wrote to General Oakes; "he made nearly as much fuss about the Captain Pasha having given us leave to go up the Black Sea if we chose it. To say the truth, I believe he is jealous; I never have yet either asked or allowed him to introduce one person to me since I came here, but young Morier, whom I dislike extremely, and Count Ludolph, whom I think of not in the way it

is the fashion to do." Lady Hester at her worst, it will be seen, was insufferable.

As it turned out, the application for a passport to France was unsuccessful, Lady Hester was disappointed, the fall of Bonaparte was postponed, and the party left Constantinople for Egypt.

Twice they were detained by contrary gales and had to take shelter under the lee of islands, once for five or six days and a second time for no less than ten. Then the wind became fair and they reached Rhodes where they stopped for a few hours to take in provisions. Thence they sailed for two days and were already half-way to Alexandria when a southerly gale rose which soon became so fierce that they were forced to put about. The ship sprang a leak; the pumps proved to be useless; the efforts of all the gentlemen and all the servants could barely keep the ship afloat by ceaseless bailing with buckets while the pilot headed for Rhodes. Lady Hester ordered her maid to

pack a small box with indispensable articles, while she herself drew wine from a cask and distributed it to the sailors to hearten their over-taxed energies. The gale increased; the ship heeled gunwale down and never again righted herself. Three hours later the south-west point of the island of Rhodes was visible on the weather bow. The pilot put the ship's head to it, but she no longed obeyed the helm and drifted further and further to lee. A vain attempt was made to anchor; still the ship drove. She was now so full of water that it was certain she could not much longer be kept afloat. It was decided to hoist out the long-boat. This was done. Meryon himself took with him from the abandoned ship a sabre, a pistol, and a bag of dollars.

Their hope now was to reach a rock about half a mile to leeward. Wave after wave broke over the boat, but at last they succeeded in reaching the rock and landing in a little creek on the sheltered side. They had no provisions,

no fresh water, they were soaked to the skin and utterly exhausted. Sleep was what they most needed, and they settled down to sleep as well as they could. A cave was discovered large enough to house Lady Hester and her maid.

After midnight the wind abated somewhat and the Captain suggested that he and the crew should attempt to reach land and secure boats to rescue the rest of the party. This was agreed to, and it was arranged that, when they reached shore, they should light a fire as a signal of their safe arrival. Two hours later the watchers on the rock were cheered by the sight of a distant blaze.

All next day they waited, consumed with fear that the Greeks, once safe themselves, had left them to their fate; but a few minutes before sunset a black speck was seen on the sea and at last the boat arrived, bringing bread, cheese, water, and arrack. The Captain had preferred to remain on shore, and the rowers,

who had obtained liquor on the island, were drunk and violent. During the night they insisted, despite the fury of the wind, on abandoning the rock. The travellers were compelled to submit. The sea ran high and they pulled almost in the face of it. At last the stern touched, and at the same moment a wave filled the boat from stem to stern. Lady Hester was lifted out of the boat and all got to shore as they could.

Lady Hester and her maid were lodged in a rat-infested windmill, but soon the maid, Mrs. Fry, joined the rest round the fire in the deluge of rain outside, and the valiant Lady Hester remained to face the rats alone.

Next day they moved to a wretched village and from there Meryon went ahead to the town of Rhodes, followed more slowly by the rest. Lady Hester fell ill on the journey, but after a few days' rest she was able to continue. "Bruce, Mr. Pearce, and the doctor are all well," she wrote a few days later to General

Oakes, describing the adventure. "They have saved nothing; but do not fancy us dull, for we (myself included) danced the Pyrrhic dance with the peasants in the villages on our way hither."

It was at Rhodes that Lady Hester took permanently to man's attire. Meryon, in his grandiloquent way, makes for her the apologies which she would certainly not have dreamt of making for herself. "It will be thought by many persons that Lady Hester Stanhope violated too far the regard due to her sex in the resolution she now adopted of equipping herself as a man, and as a Turk. But let it be recollected that she had lost everything in the shipwreck, and that even the cities of the Levant, had she been in one, had neither milliners nor mantua-makers who understand how to make European female dresses, nor materials for them, could she have made them herself. The impossibility of getting what she wanted was therefore so evident, that she un-

avoidably made choice of the Turkish costume, in which the long robes, the turban, the yellow slippers, and pelisses, have really nothing incompatible with female attire. Thus she was enabled to travel unveiled, which, in woman's clothes, would have been contrary to the usages of the country; and as Lady Hester decided on abandoning the English costume, the rest of the party did the same."

While the rest remained at Rhodes, Meryon set off for Smyrna to purchase a refit for the whole party.

7

At Rhodes, in consequence of a difference of opinion with their mistress, all the servants were dismissed except a Greek boy, Georgaki Dallegio, and Lady Hester established herself in a little house three miles outside the town.

In five weeks Meryon returned from Smyrna with his purchases. "The cases were opened, and the party assumed their new dresses. Ignorant at that time of the distinctions of dress which prevail in Turkey as in all countries, every one flattered himself that he was habited becomingly. Lady Hester and Mr. B[ruce] little suspected what proved to be the case—that their exterior was that of small gentry; and Mr. Pearce and myself thought we were far from looking like chaôoshes with our

yatagans stuck in our girdles. For each, in the choice he had made, had been guided by fancy; not considering that in all countries particular costumes are affected by particular ranks and professions; and that, excepting in the case of public functionaries, simplicity combined with the intrinsic value of the materials is, more than show, the mark of the private gentleman."

They sailed from Rhodes in the comfort and security of an English frigate, landing at Alexandria on February 14th, 1812, four days over the second anniversary of Lady Hester's departure from England. They were hospitably entertained by the British resident who, being learned in the matter of Turkish dress, was much amused at their costumes. Here the servants dismissed at Rhodes were replaced and the party proceeded to Rosetta and thence by boat to Cairo. "Lady Hester's first care was to equip herself with proper clothes to appear in before the pasha. She chose

(among the costumes of Mahometans) that of the people of Barbary, I believe of the Tunisians, and purchased a sumptuous dress, beautifully embroidered, of purple velvet and gold." Meryon adds a footnote: "For her turban and girdle she bought two handsome cashmere shawls, each at £50. Her pantaloons, most richly embroidered in gold, cost £40; her waistcoat and her pelisse £50; her sabre £20; her saddle £35. Other articles necessary for the completion of the costume amounted to £100 more."

The visit to the Pasha was made a few days later. "The pasha, rising at her entrance, received Lady Hester in a small kiosk, or pavilion, being a detached room in the garden of his harym painted and gilded so beautifully within and without that it looked like a fairy palace. The room had a divan or sofa of scarlet velvet gorgeously embroidered with gold, on three sides, and a fountain in the centre. A delicious sherbet of a green colour

was first presented in cut glass cups; the pipe was presented, but declined by her ladyship, who had not yet learned to smoke. Coffee was then served in china cups, supported in gold zerfs, ornamented with precious stones. The pasha smoked a rich pipe, and drank his coffee out of a cup equally costly."

Having visited the sights of Cario and narrowly escaped drowning in a rickety ferry-boat on the Nile, Lady Hester, accompanied by a guard of French Mamelukes, moved to Damietta, whence the party fled before the fleas, mosquitoes, and flies, and, after a voyage of five days, reached Jaffa.

By this time the travellers had come to feel at home among the Turks and had made some progress towards understanding and speaking Turkish and Arabic. At Jaffa they at once began to prepare for a visit to Jerusalem. Lady Hester had added a travelling Mameluke dress to her wardrobe. "It consisted of a satin vest, with long sleeves, open to the bend of the

arm, which reached to the hips only, and folding over at the chest was attached with a single button at the throat and waist; over this again she wore a red cloth jacket, in shape like a scanty spencer, with short sleeves, and trimmed with gold lace. The trowsers were of the same cloth, gorgeously embroidered with gold at the pockets, as well before as behind. They were large and loose, as is the fashion in Turkey, and, when worn, formed, by their numerous folds, a very beautiful drapery. Over the whole, when on horseback, she wore the burnooz or white-hooded cloak, the pendent tassels and silky look of which gave great elegance to her figure. The turban was a Cashmere shawl, put on with the peculiar fullness which the Mamelukes affect in their headdress, and which is very becoming. This dress, as far as regards the sherwals (or trowsers) which were of the same colour as the jacket, is peculiar to Egypt; for throughout Syria the sherwals are almost always blue, and generally

dark. But this Egytian costume was more proper for her ladyship, because her saddle and bridle were Egyptian; being of crimson velvet embroidered in gold.

"She was generally mistaken for some young bey with his moustachios not yet grown."

They rode out of Jaffa through the gardens, into the open fields haunted by great flights of storks, and so on through the rich, undulating country towards Ramlah. They were accompanied by two horsemen, sent at Lady Hester's request by Mohammed Aga, the governor of Jaffa. The travellers rode on horses and mules and ten camels carried their baggage. Mr. Pearce, who had joined the party at Constantinople, had now left it. On their way they rode through a vast swarm of locusts which covered the fields to the right and left, "marching in a straight line, not to be stopped by any impediment. At one place, there was a house and a tree in their way; they covered both so completely, that neither stone nor trunk

could be descried, and both objects appeared as if cased in bright green."

Leaving Ramlah, they had their first experience of the rugged mountain paths of Syria. They camped for the night on the stony ground near a village which lay among vines, figs, and olives. Here they were politely received by the shaykh Abu Ghosh, who plied the trade of highwayman on the Jerusalem road, extracting with impunity heavy tolls from the Christian pilgrims and even levying contributions from the monasteries of the Holy City. His three brothers shared his power and plunder, and in that wild country they were easily able, with their band of mountaineers, to defy the threats of pashas. "Abu Ghosh, then, received us very courteously, killed a sheep for us, gave us corn for our animals, and supplied all our wants. He was naturally curious to see and converse with a lady who was travelling so splendidly and who, he soon observed, was not to be numbered with the

pilgrims in the habit of traversing his territory. For these, even if Europeans, are ill mounted and accoutred, and are rendered timorous by the exaggerated accounts that are given them by the monks of this chieftain's cruelty. Finding the talents and conversation of her ladyship, and the dignity of her manners, to exceed anything he had ever seen in Europeans, his delight was unbounded.

"The supper sent from his kitchen was prepared, as he told us, by the hands of his four wives, who vied with each other in cooking some delicacy. . . . From one it was a dish of rolled vine leaves, containing minced meat. From another, kusas (known in England as the vegetable marrow) stuffed with rice and minced meat. From the third, a lamb roasted whole. From the fourth, an immense dish of boiled rice, surrounding and covering four boiled chickens. Besides these, there was the pilaw of the country, with morsels of meat stirred up among it."

It was during this halt that Lady Hester showed that courage and diplomacy which never failed her in an emergency. As night drew near, one of the Mamelukes urged the necessity of posting guards round the encampment. He strongly suspected the civilities of Abu Ghosh who, as a professional robber, must have cast an avid eye on the copiousness of their baggage and could have little reason for sparing the party. Lady Hester rose to the occasion magnificently. She requested Abu Ghosh himself to furnish the guard. The old shaykh complied at once and even undertook to keep watch himself. The party slept in security, and on the following morning the guard was liberally paid, Abu Ghosh himself received a handsome present, and he and Lady Hester parted the best of friends. They would not have done so, one suspects, if she had proved less generous. One of the brothers escorted the party for some distance.

As they approached Jerusalem, Lady Hester

recalled a prophecy made years ago by Brothers, the fortune-teller, to the effect that she would make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, pass seven years in the Desert, and lead forth the chosen people as Queen of the Jews. The first part of the prophecy was now in the act of fulfilment and Lady Hester often laughingly asserted that she looked forward to the fulfilment of the rest. When a prophecy is known to the subject of it, its fulfilment becomes more probable, and it is true that in later years Lady Hester came to regard the words of Brothers more and more seriously.

On the second day after their arrival in Jerusalem, Lady Hester, according to her habit, wrote to the Governor, Kengi Ahmet, expressing her wish to visit him. She was formally received by him "in a saloon at the top of his palace where a window opened on the court of the Great Mosque, the supposed Temple of Solomon." She paid other calls and visited the sacred sights. When it was known

that she was on her way to the Holy Sepulchre, the doors of the church were closed and then, to produce a ceremonious effect, flung suddenly open at the moment of her arrival, a politeness which, one feels, an English lady of the Regency period would be the first to appreciate.

An expedition was made to Bethlehem and on May 30th the party left Jerusalem and returned to Ramlah. Once again, at the intermediate village, the shaykh Abu Ghosh was all attention, and once again he received a handsome present—so handsome indeed that he accompanied the party as far as Ramlah. Liberality, when strictly mercenary, is a great civilizer, and it cannot be denied that it was an important factor in the ascendancy gained by Lady Hester in these earlier wanderings. That she was courageous in emergency she proved again and again, but there were emergencies when money made bravery unnecessary, while it did not deprive them of their spectacular effect. Nor must it be for-

gotten, in following Lady Hester's wanderings, that her daring expeditions to remote places were usually made first, and far more uncomfortably and precariously, by the faithful Meryon, who went ahead to prepare quarters for her. Meryon is so quiet, so unassuming, that one is always ignoring his courage and enterprise. But no one can call Lady Hester unassuming. She was courageous and loved adventure, but she was also intensely self-conscious. She loved to contemplate herself as the heroine of adventures and when she described them afterwards she did not fail to tune them up to a pitch considerably shriller than the actual.

From Ramlah the journey was continued by various stages past Cæsarea, Mount Carmel, Hayfa, to Acre. Lady Hester visited the Pasha of Acre, was splendidly received, and was assured by him of every help in her travels through the pashalik. The party made an expedition to Nazareth where Lady Hester was

housed in the Franciscan monastery. On a dark evening after sunset they left the village to return to Acre, accompanied through the dim and crooked streets by priests carrying lanterns. But when the priests and the lights left them, Lady Hester's horse, treading on a great stone in the sudden darkness, fell and pinned her beneath it. She was half stunned by the fall; her head, her collar-bone, and her knee were bruised and she was carried back to her quarters in Nazareth where the party was delayed for a week.

Soon after the return to Acre they set off along the coast. The miscellaneous retinue of men, beasts, and baggage had now increased to the size of a caravan. The Lady Hester of these slow, primitive, and somewhat ceremonious progressions seems already very remote from the lively woman of fashion of three or four years ago. How much, one wonders, had she changed in speech and manner? It is difficult to judge, for during this stage of her life

we have almost lost touch with the old Lady Hester. We see her, but hardly hear her. Meryon records her activities, but not her talk; only in her letters we can still sometimes hear the lively, fascinating, garrulous, conceited woman, once so familiar to us. Then the voice is silent again, the familiar grows strange, and she passes before our eyes, a richly dressed and solemn figure, riding slowly over plains and mountain passes and through squalid Eastern villages; resting awhile in strange towns, paying ceremonious visits to Eastern personages, and again moving tirelessly on, followed by her strangely mixed retinue. Her maid, Mrs. Fry, who appears in these surroundings so incurably, so comically English, despite the fact that Lady Hester had engaged her in Malta, is the one homely and familiar creature in all this Oriental strangeness. For her, everything foreign was merely an aberration from the commonsense of things English. She had no patience with foreign names and ruthlessly

turned them into English ones. Mustapha, a janissary who had accompanied them on a part of their travels, was, for Mrs. Fry, Muster Farr. Philippaki, in whose house they had lodged near Rhodes, became, by a simple adaptation, Philip Parker. We see her on at least two occasions flying in terror from foreign rats, and now, as they rode out of Acre, the poor creature has been forced into man's clothes; "and, from her timidity in this new garb . . . was often exposed to the danger of falling from her ass, on which she persisted in sitting in the decorous posture customary with woman in England; although in a country where women invariably ride astride, and where there are no side saddles, she might have imitated them with less singularity and without indecency."

Poor Mrs. Fry. She had to endure many more years of the East before she finally left her mistress and returned home in, or about, the year 1820.

8

THE caravan moved slowly on, between the mountains and the sea, for from Acre to Sidon the lower slopes of the Lebanon are seldom more than a mile from the coast. As they approached Tyre, the ground rose to a promontory from the summit of which the travellers suddenly beheld, far beneath them, the city with its ruined towers jutting into the clear sea, and the vast plain "which, bounded by hills at first retreating and again at a distance of several miles bending towards the seashore, showed on its varied surface the ripened corn, the maize, the water-melon fields, and other grains and fruits which the inhabitant of the western world never sees growing." Soon they had descended to the plain. "Four hours' march brought us to the skirt of a village, the

direct road to which diverged somewhat to the right, through plantations of mulberry-trees, whilst we proceeded along the seashore. In a quarter of an hour, we came to a small rivulet, running over a gravelly bottom with a limpid stream. Here we were to halt for the night. The camels were unloaded, the tents pitched, and every disposition made for dinner, and for passing the night."

As some of them strolled through the village they came upon another party encamped. Under a fig-tree a plump, middle-aged Turk was boiling a saucepan. Two packhorses and a donkey grazed near by. On a carpet, spread on the ground, sat a beautiful bronze-faced Abyssinian girl, thirteen or fourteen years of age, and beside her a little black girl washing rice for the supper. The older girl did not attempt, in the usual fashion, to cover her face, and the plump Turk invited the travellers to join the party. He had heard a rumour that an English princess was travelling through the

country and remarked that he was a slave-merchant and that the two girls were for sale. He should be happy if either suited the English lady.

Next day the travellers' journey lay through the rich plain of Tyre at the head of which the hills again close in towards the sea, and on through villages and across river-beds and watercourses till they came to Sidon.

Wherever they went, the news of the progress through the country of an English princess, fabulously rich, had spread before them. It was no doubt largely due to the curiosity and cupidity aroused by these picturesque exaggerations that Lady Hester owed the cordial welcome everywhere offered to her.

No sooner had she reached Sidon than a courier came down from the mountains bringing her an invitation from the Emir of the Druses. Lady Hester accepted with alacrity, for she had already decided to inspect the Druse country. The Emir sent twelve camels,

twenty-five mules, four horses, and seven foot-soldiers to escort the party. "It was on July 29th that we departed for Dayr el Kamar, the residence of the Emir Beshyr. About one mile and a half from Sayda," the modern Sidon, "the delightful gardens which surrounded it terminated at a river, before mentioned, of some size called Nahr el Ewely. Here we began to ascend Mount Lebanon, its foot touching the sea-shore; at Sayda it is only half a mile distant from it; and we were now on the territory of the Drûzes. . . . To look at the soil, as we ascended the narrow paths of the mountain, one would have thought that no culture could have made it productive; yet industry had surmounted every obstacle; for vines, olive, mulberry, and fig-trees, tobacco, and some other productions, bore evidence of its richness.

"We proceeded for three hours, having passed the village of Jûn, and encamped for the night at Masbud. The Shaykh . . . had

received orders to supply us with provisions, and we wanted for nothing."

That ride through the mountains, with the brief sight of the village of Jûn or Djoun, has a strange and pathetic significance for us who follow it now, more than a century after it took place and almost a century since Lady Hester died and was buried. For looking into her future, already a hundred years behind us, we see her returning, after years of strange experience, to that hilltop of Djoun to spend there the last unhappy years of her life, to die there in solitude, and to be buried in her garden; and, knowing the vital significance that the place held for her, it is strangely moving to watch her passing it now, unconscious and undisturbed by the faintest foreboding, on her way to visit the Emir of the Druses.

"They say," writes Meryon laconically of the Emir in a letter home, "he is a very good man. It is true he blinded his three nephews and had his prime minister strangled, owing

to some suspicion that they were favourites of the people; but these things go for nothing in Turkey; and such a man is a Christian convert in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem."

At Dayr el Kamar a residence of the Emir's had been prepared for the party. Lady Hester stayed there until August 26th and, during her stay, visited the Emir in his palace, which stood upon a small mountain a mile away. "Great preparations were made for her reception. When there, the whole day was taken up in viewing the apartments, drinking sherbet, smoking, and eating. . . . The Emir presented Lady Hester with a handsome horse, richly caparisoned."

Bruce had decided to make a journey to Aleppo, but Lady Hester refused to go, saying that she hated the Levantine Franks. Besides, it was her intention to go to Damascus, and Meryon subsequently had reason to believe that at this time she had already formed a scheme, which she eventually carried out, to

visit, unaccompanied, the Bedouin Arabs. Bruce's absence would provide a good opportunity for this.

She wrote to the Pasha of Damascus to announce her arrival and received in reply a courteous invitation brought by a chokadar who had been ordered to conduct her and her party to the city.

Damascus is a two days' journey from Dayr el Kamar, but Lady Hester and Meryon travelled slowly; they wished to be sure, before they arrived, that the city was tranquil, for a report had reached them that the commandant of the garrison had revolted against the newly appointed pasha and that the city was in a turmoil. And so they travelled slowly through the fertile valleys and arid summits of the Lebanon, past villages, streams, and the cold springs of the river Ewely where they pitched their tents on the green turf. Their road led them up to the stony heights where patches of snow still lay in the northward hollows; and

soon, when they had begun to dip downwards, an immense panorama opened before them, bounded by the Anti-Lebanon, with the huge Gebel el Shaykh, white with everlasting snow, and the plain, sprinkled with villages and watered throughout its length by the river Casmia, and thirty miles away, vaguely shimmering in the sun, the ruined temples of Baalbec. At night, after a steep descent, they camped beside the river, and next day they entered the Anti-Lebanon and Meryon went ahead, as usual, to prepare quarters for Lady Hester. On September 1st, having secured a house, he rode out to meet her. The chokadar who guided them had several times repeated his warning that it would not be safe for Lady Hester to enter the city unveiled; but, to the dismay of all, she had announced that she would enter as she was, and in full daylight.

Meryon met them in the suburbs. "The people gazed at us, and all eyes were turned towards her ladyship. Her feminine looks

passed with many, without doubt, for those of a beardless youth. More saw at once that it must be a woman; but before they could recover from their astonishment, we had passed on. Thus we arrived, followed by a few boys only, at the Christian quarter of the city, and went to the house which had been prepared as above mentioned, for her reception."

9

LADY HESTER was resolved to impress Damascus, and she did so. A house had been allotted to her, as to any other European, in the Christian quarter—a quarter which, as she knew well enough, is always despised by the Mohammedans. But Lady Hester was determined to stay in Damascus as a distinguished and honoured visitor and she immediately despatched a dragoman to the Pasha to say that is was impossible for her to remain in the allotted house, and she raised objections to every other house proposed until a beautiful palace in the best quarter of the city was offered and accepted.

Self-assurance, if it cannot move mountains, can often accomplish the miraculous, and in

Damascus Lady Hester certainly worked wonders. She took her first ride in the town accompanied only by the youth Georgaki and one janissary, showing thus her complete reliance on the discretion of the inhabitants. "When it is considered," writes Meryon, "how very fanatic the inhabitants of Damascus were, and in what great abhorrence they held infidels; that native Christians could only inhabit a particular quarter of the town; and that no one of these, at the peril of having his bones broken by the first angry Turk he met, could ride on horseback within the walls, or wear as part of his dress any coloured cloth or turban that was showy, it will be matter of surprise how completely these prejudices were laid aside in favour of Lady Hester, and of those persons who were with her. She rode out every day; and, according to the custom of the country, coffee was poured on the road before her horse by several of the inhabitants, in order to do her honour. It was said that, in

going through a bazaar, all the people in it rose up as she passed."

Wonderful Lady Hester. For what she accomplished was indeed wonderful. In her courage, her enterprise, her admirable faith in human nature, she was great. Why is it, then, that she always falls short of true greatness? Why must she always be pausing to admire herself, to write shrill letters that extolled and vulgarized her exploits and carefully mentioned the various costumes she wore, endlessly trying, it seems, to spur her friends into a fever of admiration? "All I can say about myself," she writes from Damascus, "sounds like conceit; but others could tell you I am the oracle of the Arabs and the darling of all the troops, who seem to think that I am a deity because I can *ride,* and because I wear arms; and the fanatics all bow before me, because the Dervises think me a wonder, and have given me a piece of Mahomet's tomb, and I have won the heart of the pasha by a letter I wrote

him from Dayr el Kamar. Hope will tell you how I got on upon the coast, and if he could make anything of the Pasha of Acre, his ministers, or the rest of them, who were all at my feet."

Yes, it certainly "sounds like conceit," so like it that it can hardly fail to prejudice the reader. In her heart there must have lurked the final misgiving, the small, busy fear that gnaws at the hearts of those who have no humility. It was her lack of humility and self-abandonment which had made it impossible for her to love truly, and it was the converse of these—the pride and the tyranny of self—which was now incessantly urging her to these exploits, to this vain and feverish endeavour to appease the unappeasable hunger of self and to show to herself and others some justification for her immense pride. So it is that we receive from the story of her extraordinary life the impression of two conflicting moods—one the mood of the old heroes of romance who

go gaily forth in search of adventure; the other, that of a tortured and disillusioned creature vainly seeking an anodyne. And so, in a sense, all her advances are retreats, all her bold pursuits are terrified flights. Some vague sense of the truth must have stirred in her when she wrote to Stratford Canning, "it is a happy thing for me that I can make *necessity a pleasure.*"

Lady Hester's life at Damascus was a reiteration, on a more brilliant scale, of her life, already described, in other Eastern cities. But the ambition upon which her mind was now concentrated was to visit the ruins of Palmyra, a dangerous and precarious undertaking which involved a journey across a desert infested by tribes of wandering Bedouins. Up to this time only three Englishmen had made the journey, one of whom went disguised as a pedlar in the depths of winter when the Bedouins keep their tents and the rains provide water for the traveller. Another, similarly disguised, had

been stripped and robbed and returned to Aleppo in his shirt and drawers, "after a series of sufferings which would form a romance." Even the natives of Damascus warned her against the project. But Lady Hester was not to be deterred. She wrote to Mahanna el Fadel, Emir of the Anizys, as the Bedouins who range that part of the Syrian Desert are called, and asked for an interview with him.

The Pasha of Damascus, hearing of her determination, offered her a formidable body of troops as an escort, but warned her that the Emir Mahanna "was in little or no subjection to the Porte, and that the inhabitants of Tadmur (as Palmyra is called in Arabic) were completely out of the reach of the arm of justice, in case they should use any foul play against her." She resolved to accept the Pasha's offer. Camels were hired and the troops were ordered to hold themselves in readiness. But the uncertain temper of the rival troops in Damascus made her hesitate. She

had learnt, too, that the Bedouin Arabs disliked the new Pasha and would join any party against him, and then, as she says in a letter, "there will be a fine confusion in the desert as well as here, and the roads in every direction will be filled with Delibashes, &c, &c." Besides this, a rumour was abroad that 50,000 Wahabees were within a four days' march of Damascus. Even Lady Hester thought it would be wise to pause and see what turn things would take.

When matters were at this stage, a messenger arrived announcing that Bruce was coming to Damascus with a Mr. Barker, the English consul at Aleppo, and adding that he had been taken ill on the road, though not so severely as to prevent him travelling. On hearing this, Lady Hester insisted that Dr. Meryon should go to Bruce's assistance, and the Doctor, accompanied by a groom and armed with his medicine chest, set off on horseback.

At this precise moment, in response to her letter to the Emir of the Anizys, Nasar, the Emir's son, came to see Lady Hester in Damascus. "When he was introduced to her presence, he said that 'he had heard of her intention of going, under the protection of a body of troops, to Tadmur; and that he came from his father to warn her against such a step; for, if she attempted to force her way thither, he considered himself at liberty to treat her and her escort as he did all those who presumed to cross the desert without his permission—namely, as enemies.' He declared to her that 'if so distinguished a person as she was would place herself under the protection of the Bedouins, and rely upon their honour, they would pledge themselves for conducting her in safety thither and back; but that, if she chose any other way, she would learn to her cost who was sultan in those wilds.' He added, 'soldiers of the cities know not the tracks and landmarks of the desert; where the

wells were—what parts are infested with hostile tribes—who is friendly and who is not; and, when they have led you into difficulties, they will be the first to desert you.'

"Many reasons he no doubt gave," adds Meryon, "which, joined to his natural eloquence, could not fail to convince. For he was a young man of very fine talents, as we had afterwards many opportunities of observing; and, when bidding Lady Hester to repose confidence in him and his father, he knew how to inspire it. He was now about twenty-five years of age, plain in his person, but dignified, eloquent, and of the most engaging manners."

At this point the three men inconveniently returned to Damascus. But Fate was kind; Barker was seized with a fever, Bruce was bound by politeness to stay with him, and the Doctor had to attend him professionally. The moment was propitious and Lady Hester took advantage of it. She left them in Damascus and set off, as she told them, for Hamah.

"Lady Hester," writes Meryon, "did certainly take the road to Hamah, but, unknown to us all, she had arranged a meeting with Nasar's father, and was determined to enter the Desert alone, and thus give the Emir Mahanna a proof of her reliance on his honour." Engaging two interpreters at a village on the way, she "then turned off from the high road, at Tel Bysy, a hamlet near Hems, plunged into the Desert, under the guidance of a single Bedouin sent for that purpose, and trusted herself, a solitary and unprotected woman, to hordes of robbers, whose livelihood is the plunder they make, and whose exploits are numbered by the travellers they have despoiled. Arrived at Mahanna's tent, her courage and demeanour struck that prince with astonishment. 'I know you are a robber,' she said, on their first interview, 'and that I am now in your power; but I fear you not; and I have left all those behind who were offered me as a safeguard, and all my countrymen who

could be considered as my protectors, to show you that it is you and your people whom I have chosen as such.' Mutually pleased with each other, after a short interview, Mahanna escorted her ladyship to within a few miles of Hamah, and, commissioning his son to conduct her safe to the residence prepared for her in that city, they then parted."

Lady Hester describes her expedition in a letter to General Oakes. "When B. was nursing Mr. Barker, who had a fever, I made an experiment upon the good faith of the Arabs; I went with the great chief, Mahanna el Fadel (who commands 40,000 men) into the desert for a week, and marched three days with their encampment. I was treated with the greatest respect and hospitality, and it was, perhaps, altogether, the most curious sight I ever saw: horses and mares fed upon camels' milk, Arabs living on little else, except a little rice, and sometimes a sort of bread; the space around me covered with living things, 1,000 camels

coming to water from one tribe only; the old poets from the banks of the Euphrates, singing the praises and the feats of ancient heroes; children quite naked; women with lips dyed light-blue, and their nails red, and hands all over flowers and designs of different kinds; a chief who is obeyed like a great king—starvation and pride so mixed, that I really could not have had an idea of it; even the clothes I presented the sons of Mahanna they could not carry, or indeed hold, but called a black slave to take them. However, I have every reason to be perfectly contented with their conduct towards me, and I am the *queen* with them all."

When Barker had recovered, he and Bruce, and later Meryon also, joined Lady Hester at Hamah, where she was now established in a small house. On Meryon's return, she sent him forward to Palmyra to visit the Emir Mahanna, who had sent word that he was ill. It was, as Meryon remarks, a good op-

portunity, for his expedition "would farther strengthen the friendship of the Emir, by whose permission alone Lady Hester could get to Palmyra; and would afford me an opportunity of judging how far there was a possibility for her to perform a journey through wastes, which, we are told, are without water and without vegetation."

Finally, many weeks after Meryon's return, when the weather, which had been stormy, was becoming more settled, the last preparations for departure were made, and on March 20th, 1813, they started. It was an imposing caravan. All, including poor Mrs. Fry, were dressed as Bedouins. Twenty-two camels carried their baggage. "Lady Hester was followed by the Bedouin chieftains, who composed her body-guard. Their long lances, plumed with ostrich feathers; their curling hair hanging in ringlets over their cheeks and neck; their gay-coloured keffiyahs, drawn over their mouths like vizors; their lean mares, every

thing about them was novel. . . ." They entered the vast waste of the Desert like folk embarking on the sea and slowly losing sight of land. As they advanced, their escort was increased by Bedouins of other tribes. When they rested at the Wells of Keffiyah, shaykhs came from all quarters to pay their respects to Lady Hester. A great black slave, armed with a tremendous battle-axe, guarded her tent. On the march the Bedouin horsemen beguiled the journey with sham fights.

The journey was not without adventure. Nasar and his Arabs, despite their solemn undertakings, began to rob the servants, and on the fifth day, when Lady Hester, according to her habit, summoned Nasar and others to converse with her, Nasar replied moodily that he was not disposed to leave his tent. His moodiness caused a buzz of conjecture among the Arabs and Lady Hester's servants grew alarmed. But Lady Hester herself treated the matter with complete indifference.

Next day, when they were encamped, news was brought to Lady Hester that some of the Arabs' mares had been stolen and that enemies had been seen. Nasar and his people armed, mounted, and rode off, and Lady Hester and her party were left alone. The situation was alarming. They armed themselves and took up positions to resist a possible attack. Twenty minutes later, Nasar and his men returned, and the travellers were inclined to suspect that the whole thing had been a trick to test their courage. If so, Lady Hester came out of it well, for throughout the incident she remained "as calm as if in a ballroom."

When at length Lady Hester entered Palmyra, the inhabitants came out to meet her. "There might be altogether fifty men on foot, who, naked down to the waist, without shoes or stockings, and covered with a sort of antique petticoat, ran by the side of as many horsemen, galloping in all directions, with rude kettle-drums beating and colours flying. The tanned

skins of the men on foot formed a curious contrast with the cowry shells, or blackamoor's teeth, studded on the two belts which crossed their shoulders, and to which were suspended their powder-flasks and cartouch-boxes. These Palmyrenes carry matchlocks, slung across their backs, and are very skilful in the use of them. They are huntsmen by profession, and they are often engaged in petty warfare with the Bedouins, for the protection of their caravans.

"For the amusement of Lady Hester and Mr. B., they displayed before them a mock attack and defence of a caravan. . . . On entering the Valley of the Tombs, Lady Hester's attention was absorbed in viewing the wonders around her, and the combatants desisted. But another sight, prepared by the Palmyrenes, here awaited her. In order to increase the effect which ruins cause on those who enter them for the first time, the guides led us up through the long colonnade, which extends four thousand feet in length from north-

west to south-east, in a line with the gate of the temple. This colonnade is terminated by a triumphal arch. The shaft of each pillar, to the right and left, at about the height of six feet from the ground, has a projecting pedestal, called in architecture a console, under several of which is a Greek or Palmyrene inscription; and upon each there once stood a statue, of which at present no vestige remains excepting the marks of the cramp-iron for the feet. What was our surprise to see, as we rode up the avenue, and just as the triumphal arch came in sight, that several beautiful girls . . . had been placed on these very pedestals, in the most graceful postures, and with garlands in their hands; their elegant shapes being but slightly concealed by a single loose robe, girded at the waist with a zone, and a white crape veil covering their heads. On each side of the arch other girls, no less lovely, stood by threes, whilst a row of six was ranged across the gate of the arch, with thyrsi in their hands. Whilst Lady

Hester advanced, these living statues remained immovable on their pedestals; but when she had passed they leaped on the ground, and joined in a dance by her side. On reaching the triumphal arch, the whole in groups, together with men and girls intermixed, danced around her. Here some bearded elders chanted verses in her praise, and all the spectators joined in chorus. . . . The procession advanced, after a pause, to the gate of the Temple, being by this time increased by the addition of every man, woman, and child in the village." So Lady Hester reached the cottage which had been prepared for her in the north-west angle of the Temple of the Sun.

The visit to Palmyra lasted three or four days, at the end of which their departure was precipitated by the discovery that four spies of a hostile tribe of Bedouins had been discovered near the village. Nasar insisted on the danger of delay and the party set off across the desert. The journey back was as eventful

as the journey out. They were pursued by hostile Bedouins, visited strange encampments and remote villages, and at last, on April 13th, Lady Hester reached Hamah. Crowds came out to welcome her, "considering her as a true heroine, who could perform in triumph what not a pasha in all Turkey durst venture to do with all his troops at his heels."

In describing this exploit in a letter, Lady Hester, in her usual manner, touched up the facts. "Without joke," she wrote, "I have been crowned Queen of the Desert, under the triumphal arch at Palmyra."

10

After a month at Hamah, Lady Hester moved to Latakia, the ancient Laodicea. Her health was still indifferent, though the fine air of the desert had improved it, and her mind was restless and undecided. She had thoughts of returning to Europe, yet at the same time she was planning new explorations and was in communication with the Chief of the Wahabees. Her restlessness sprang, perhaps, from a change in the relation between herself and Bruce. Neither of them had the qualities which alone could have preserved their love in its original simplicity and freshness. In October came a letter informing Bruce of the serious illness of his father, and the news acted as a solvent upon their uncertainty. The lovers decided to part.

On October 15th Bruce left Latakia. The parting was extremely painful to both. Plague was raging all round Latakia and Lady Hester resolved to return to Sidon and establish herself in the Lebanon. But a few days before she was to start, she fell ill. Weak and dejected as she was, she was an easy prey to disease. Meryon fell ill the same evening. For five days Lady Hester was delirious and, after that, remained for a long time in a state of collapse. Meryon believed she was dying; Barker, the consul from Aleppo, sealed up her papers and set her affairs in order. But by degrees, and very slowly, she began to recover. In December her recovery was checked by an attack of ague, and it was not till January, 1814, that, still extremely weak, she could be moved to Sidon.

"We are now arrived," writes Meryon, "at a new period in Lady Hester's peregrinations, in which, from a traveller, she becomes a sojourner in a strange land; and, abandoning

Europe and its customs altogether, conforms herself entirely to the modes of life of the Orientals. Not that it is clear whether she was fixed in such a determination at first; but, unwilling to return to England, with which country she had become, for several reasons, disgusted, and, finding no other on the Continent sufficiently quiet to insure a permanent asylum, she thought she would remain some time longer in Syria, where, looking down on the world from the top of Mount Lebanon, she might calmly contemplate its follies and vicissitudes, neither mixed up with the one, nor harrassed by the other."

The place she had chosen for her retreat was the disused Monastery of Mar Elias, which stood on a bare and lonely hilltop near Sidon. But many alterations were necessary to make the place habitable, and meanwhile she lived in the city. There her ague returned, and it was not till the end of the month that she was strong enough to take a short ride

through the gardens. "Never shall I forget," wrote Meryon, "this, as it were, her new return to life. From that time her character changed deeply. She became simple in her habits, almost to cynicism. She showed, in her actions and her conversation a mind severe indeed, but powerfully vigorous. Scanning men and things with a wonderful intelligence, she commented upon them as if the motives of human actions were open to her inspection."

Towards the end of February, Lady Hester moved into her new home. Though the poor woman was broken in health and spirits, her restless mind could not be idle and she began to plan a treasure-seeking expedition to Ascalon. Perhaps it was only by the help of distractions such as this that she could endure the disillusionment and misery which had come upon her. When June brought the great heats, she determined to move up into the mountains. She wrote to the Emir Beshyr asking him to let her have a house in the village of Meshmushy,

a beautiful, shady mountain hamlet surrounded by vineyards. But the Emir sent a vague and shuffling reply, and Lady Hester answered characteristically that "whether he gave her a house or not, she should set off next day, and would pitch her tents on the mountain, if she found nothing better." She was at this time in a state of acute nervous irritation which often broke out into violent tempers. It seemed, at times, that a kind of madness came upon her during which she lost all self-control. One of such fits made the departure from home and the journey to Meshmushy a nightmare for all concerned. But after her arrival at the village she became calm again. A small house was secured and there she spent ten weeks, attended by three Arabs, a girl, an old woman, and a man for out-of-door work. "Lady Hester several times said that she had never been more comfortable since she left Malta."

The peace of Meshmushy restored her health, and with restored health her desire to

wander returned. In October she and Meryon set out over the Lebanon for Baalbec. They travelled, this time, without a guard, like the poorest pilgrims. Instead of the usual princely escort they were accompanied only by a few servants. At Baalbec they pitched their tents first in the Temple of the Sun, and then near a stream in the ruins of an old mosque. Lady Hester rode about, as usual, attracting much attention and respect. They stayed for a fortnight. Winter had already set in when they departed and violent storms added to the hardships of their journey. They visited the famous Cedars of Lebanon and stayed at various villages in the mountain, visiting and visited by the most distinguished inhabitants. They came to the Maronite Monastery of Mar Anthony, into which, despite the severity of its rule, Lady Hester forced an entry by asserting that she had the authority of the Porte to go where she wished. Her behaviour on the occasion seems to have been insolent and exacting in

the extreme; she even insisted upon riding her she-ass into the hall of the Monastery. Perhaps her tortured mind was unconsciously exacting compensation from the monks for the humiliation it was suffering; for the contrast of her present lowly style of travel with her fromer pompous progressions can hardly have failed to wound her pride.

From the Monastery Lady Hester journeyed to Tripoli, where she stayed for several weeks and once again took up the ceremonious life, with formal visits to the Governor and others, which is typical of her stay in a foreign city. A leisurely journey homewards, with several halts by the way, brought them back to Mar Elias in January, 1815.

Upon the very night of her return home, an Envoy arrived from the Sublime Porte. In the preceding year Lady Hester had come into possession of an Italian manuscript, said to be a secret copy, made by a monk from records in a Frank monastery in Syria, disclosing the

whereabouts of vast hoards of money buried in Ascalon and Sidon. Considering it to be genuine she had written to the Porte asking for facilities to excavate and offering to hand over all the treasure that might be found, reserving to herself only the honour of the discovery. The Envoy had been "deputed to invest Lady Hester with greater authority over the Turks than was, probably, ever granted even to any European ambassador; certainly, than to any unofficial Christian."

Lady Hester's income barely sufficed for her ordinary needs; she had exceeded it in her late tour to Baalbec, and she now resolved to apply to the English Government for funds to carry out her project, "considering that the reputation which she was giving to the English name was a sufficient warrant for expecting this remuneration." She set off for Acre on February 16th, 1815, and remained there till the middle of March. "No Turk now paid her a visit without wearing his *benysh,* or mantle of

ceremony; and every circumstance showed the ascendancy she had gained in public opinion. . . . In compliance with the orders contained in the firmans of the Sublime Porte, she was honoured with distinctions usually paid to princes only. In addition to her own six tents, about twenty more were furnished, one of which was of vast magnitude, and under which her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales slept, on her journey to and from Jerusalem."

On March 18th the expedition set off, a huge and impressive cavalcade, for Ascalon. For Lady Hester there was a crimson palanquin adorned with six golden balls that glittered in the sunlight. After a journey of a fortnight they arrived at Ascalon, and on All Fools' Day the great search began. The gaily coloured tents of the encampment, the huge crowd of labouring peasants, the couriers coming and going every day between Ascalon and Jaffa, the presence of Lady Hester, accompanied by the Envoy and the other noble Arabs

whom she had summoned to assist her, must have composed a scene as coloured and impressive as when Dido superintended the building of Carthage. It recalls, too, that earlier scene at Walmer ten years ago, when Lady Hester supervised the making of the new garden for William Pitt.

But again poor Lady Hester was doomed to disappointment. No treasure was found, nor anything of importance except a colossal headless statue, which, to Meryon's horror, she ordered to be broken up, in case it should be suspected that she had come to search, not, as she said, for treasure for the Porte, but for antiquities for her own country. After a fortnight of digging the enterprise was abandoned.

Yet the failure did not discredit Lady Hester's position in Syria; for the enterprise had produced a profound impression, and the fact that the Sublime Porte had countenanced and assisted her schemes confirmed the belief in her dignity and importance. But the effect

of failure on Lady Hester herself was depressing. It threw her back on her old sorrows and disillusionments. "What I have suffered is gone by," she wrote sadly to her old friend General Oakes, "what I may still have to suffer in this world God knows best; let it be what it will, may I only be *resigned* to my fate and to His pleasure. The Turks give me every day one proof of their superiority over Christians—their submission to the will of Providence." In her despair, she resolved to ask her brother James to come and take her from Syria, but the resolve fell through and she never left the East.

The English Government refused her application for pecuniary help and the great expense of the Ascalon enterprise crippled her resources. She took refuge in the quiet and simplicity of the mountains and once more settled for a while at Meshmushy.

About this time Meryon, who had followed her faithfully for over five years, began to long

for home, and it was arranged that, as soon as someone could be found to fill his place, he should go; but it was not till February, 1817, that he was finally released. The interval was an unusually uneventful period in Lady Hester's life. Most of the time, except for a visit to Antioch, was passed at Mar Elias; but she was in constant correspondence with the various Emirs and Shaykhs who were her friends, and her extraordinary power among the Arabs was as great, perhaps greater than ever. Rare visitors came to Mar Elias, among them Silk Buckingham and Firman Didot from the French embassy at Constantinople, both of whom, like Kinglake and Madden later, published their impressions of Lady Hester and her surroundings. In her storerooms she kept a formidable supply of salts and black draughts with which, in her tyrannous way, she dosed all her visitors. On one of such occasions recorded by Meryon, no less than fifteen distinguished persons were dosed.

"A servant was despatched over-night with a letter and seven black doses, and directions how to take them, for the baron and six others of the suite, with a promise of eight more doses the next day for the duke and the rest. This general drenching of fifteen travellers, which will make many persons laugh, was treated with the utmost seriousness by Lady Hester Stanhope. It was a rule with her . . . never to let anyone pass through her hands without some potion or another; and truly it may be asserted that she has saved many from the fevers of the country by her sage foresight and precautions; but it was too comical when seven or eight at a time were to be physicked. To have heard Lady Hester and myself in conference, weighing the probabilities of under or over dosing the tall captain of the guards, the mild and delicately framed baron, and the royal stomach of his highness, would have been quite a comedy."

11

Soon after Meryon left her, Lady Hester abandoned Mar Elias and found a remoter home in another deserted monastery, Dar Djoun, high up in the mountains near the village of Djoun which she had passed five years before when riding to visit the Emir Beshyr. It was in a ruinous condition and she spent a large sum which she could ill afford in making it habitable. Meryon describes the place as he found it on his second return in 1830. "The mount on which the house stands is a sort of half orange, with a flat on the summit, which afforded room for exercising-ground, a garden, stabling, and any other additional buildings that might be thought necessary. The garden, entirely of her own creation, was richly diversified with covered alleys, serpentine walks, sum-

mer-houses, pavilions, arbours, and other embellishments, in which she displayed such admirable taste, that it would not be easy, even in England, to find a more beautiful garden within similar limits.

"Around the house Lady Hester built small rooms, stables, cottages, offices, and entire dwellings. The rooms and dwellings were intended for lodging those who, she expected, would fly to her for refuge, during the revolutions which, she believed, were then impending, not only over the country in which she resided, but the whole world; and, anticipating that many individuals, whose lives would be eagerly sought after by their persecutors, must seek an asylum at her hands, she contrived several detached rooms, in such a way, that persons dwelling within the precincts of the same residence should be ignorant who their neighbours were; whose vicinity, in like manner, should be unknown to others. The whole was surrounded by a wall, more than ten feet high to the north

and west, and about six or seven feet high on the other two sides. The entire space within the wall was a parallelogram.

"The buildings were, in some instances, composed of a number of walls, one within the other, like the palace of the kings of the Medes . . . ; and, owing to the different enclosures, where servants with different occupations lived, a person attempting to enter, or to escape, was certain of being seen, and almost equally certain of being stopped. Two gateways opened into the buildings, one for the men servants and visitors, and the other for the women, and those who were introduced secretly to her ladyship's apartment. On entering by either of these two gates, a stranger would be seriously perplexed, and his first question would be, Where am I going? Is this a labyrinth, with a door here, and a dark passage there; a garden on one side, a screen on the other; here a courtyard, there another? what does it all mean? Some passages

afforded an immediate communication with parts which, to one unacquainted with the building, and judging by the roundabout approach from one to another, would seem to be at least fifty or one hundred yards apart. . . . In the garden were two pavilions, with trap-doors in the floor, leading to steps which descended to a room underground, from which opened doors through the wall upon the open country. More than one individual has been indebted for his safety, if not for his life, to these secret means of escape and shelter."

Two or three years after his departure in 1817, Meryon returned to Lady Hester but immediately left her again. The incident is mysterious. "I found," he writes, "that her ladyship had in the meanwhile completely familiarized herself with the usages of the East, conducting her establishment entirely in the Turkish manner, and adopting even much of their medical empiricism. Under these

circumstances, and at her own suggestion, I again bade her adieu, as I then believed, for the last time."

At Djoun Lady Hester lived the life of a hermit. She dropped, by degrees, all communication with England and then, with that petulant unreason which she so often showed, bitterly accused her friends and relatives of ignoring her. With the help of dervishes, magicians, and wise men, she studied astrology and the occult sciences. The old prophecy of Brothers began to assume immense importance in her mind. A crazy Frenchman, General Loustaneau, whom she had met at Haifa, reinforced her belief in her marvellous future, and an old Arab servant showed her a prophecy in an ancient Arabic manuscript which he translated as follows: "A European woman will come and live on Mount Lebanon at a certain epoch. She will build a house there, and obtain power and influence greater than a Sultan's. A boy without a father will join her, and his destiny will

be fulfilled under her wing. The coming of the Mahdi will follow, but be preceded by war, pestilence, and other calamities. The Mahdi will ride a horse born saddled; and a woman will come from a far country to partake in the mission."

Some time after this, the Emir Beshyr sent her a bay Arab mare and a she-ass which was said to be a lineal descendant of the ass on which Christ rode into Jerusalem. Some months later the mare produced a foal with a natural excrescence on its back in the form of a Turkish saddle, a curious freak amply vouched for by several witnesses. Lady Hester was inclined to believe that the "boy without a father" was the Duke of Reichstadt who visited her later.

In 1824, Captain Yorke, afterwards Earl of Hardwicke, visited her and described her in a letter. "She received me as an English lady of fashion would have done. I at once became delighted with her wit, her knowledge, and, I must say, her beauty, for she is still one of the

finest specimens of a woman I ever saw. . . . Her conversation animated beyond any person I ever met; she was in great spirits; her dress, which well became her gigantic person, very rich. I shall pass over our conversation, which was full of histories of marvels and wonders, manners and customs of the people, plague, pestilence, and famine, etc., etc." He returned to Djoun next day. "In the evening she sent for me; she smoked the Chibouque; her mind was wrought to a high pitch of enthusiasm; she talked wildly, and was much distressed in mind; in short, her intellects were much disordered, and it was very distressing."

Next year revolution broke out in the Lebanon. "The whole mountain," wrote Lady Hester, "is in a flame. The Pasha's troops are encamped two hours from me and he is expected tomorrow. It is said he is in a violent passion. . . . All the villages about me are deserted except one, which remains trembling between the troops on one side, and the moun-

taineers on the other; but they say every place in Sayda is so full that they know not where to go; even the convents have been cleared of everything valuable, and the priests are ready to fly. My situation is not a very agreeable one—not that I fear danger (for I do not know what fear means) but from the great number of miserable people who have announced their intention of taking refuge here if they are driven from the asylum they have chosen, presents me with the prospect of starvation if this business last long, for these poor people are destitute of everything."

The Emir Beshyr was victorious and took a horrible vengeance on the insurgents. Lady Hester boldly denounced him as "a dog and a monster," and thenceforward he became her bitterest enemy and a continual menace to her at Djoun. In 1827 he became still more aggressive. Lady Hester writes of an incident in a letter dated May 30th. "A *Firmanlee*" (outlaw) "having taken refuge in the Moun-

tain, under the protection of the Emir Beshyr, contrived to pick a quarrel with my water-carrier, who was quietly going about his business, and having bribed some of the Emir's Jack Ketches, they beat him most unmercifully. The Emir Beshyr and his chief people have likewise been bribed by this man, who has plenty of money at his disposal. They have all, therefore, taken the *Firmanlee's* part, and acted in the most atrocious way towards me. A short time since, the Emir thought proper to publish in the villages that all my servants were instantly to return to their homes, upon pain of losing their property or lives. I gave them all their option. Most of them have remained firm, being aware that this order is the most unjust, as well as the most ridiculous, that ever was issued. Since that, he has threatened to seize and murder them here, which he shall not do without taking my life too. Besides this, he has given orders in all the villages that men, women, and children shall be cut in a thousand

pieces who render me the smallest service. My servants, of course, as you must imagine, cannot go out, and the peasants of the villages cannot approach the house. Therefore, I am of no very pleasant situation, being deprived of the necessary supplies in food, and, what is worse, of water, for all the water here is brought upon mules' backs up a great steep.

"I should not be a thoroughbred Pitt if fear were known to me, or if I could bow to a monster who could chain together the neck and feet of a venerable, white-bearded, respectable man . . . and if a father had escaped from his clutches, has loaded his infant son with chains! For the space of three years I have refused to have the smallest communication with the Emir. He sent me one of his grand envoys the other day—one of those who were charged with the budget of lies he sent Mehemet Ali. I refused to see him, or to read the letter of which he was the bearer."

Finally Lady Hester had recourse to Con-

stantinople and the Emir Beshyr was forced to curb his savagery.

During these years Lady Hester was falling more and more deeply into debt. Her great unruly household, her constant generosity to those in distress, the swarms of fugitives whom she housed and fed at Djoun, and the lavish presents which she loved to give, devoured her income, and she was incapable of economies. A cruel hoax was practised on her by a man who pretended to be a messenger from the Duke of Sussex and a committee of influential Englishmen who, he said, intended to pay her debts and provide her with an income. In 1836 she was again fooled by a tale that she had inherited an estate in Ireland. The poor woman continued to rely on these reports, hoping against hope that every mail would bring news of the relief that she so sorely needed; and as the years passed, the agonizing expectations and bitter disappointments of the days when

mails arrived became tragic incidents of the life at Djoun.

In December, 1830, Meryon returned to her at Djoun, but his visit lasted only four months. He was horrified at the poverty in which she now lived. Her servants had stolen almost everything of value in the place. In July, 1837, he returned once again and spent a year with her. From the materials collected during these two visits he constructed that extraordinary account of Lady Hester in the last years of her life which exists in the *Memoirs*. There is something terrible in the spectacle of this portentous woman, immured in her crumbling castle, consuming her last years in bewildering activities, upon all of which, however trivial, she expended the same appalling energy. "In the same day," writes Meryon, "I have frequently known her to dictate, with the most enlarged political views, papers that concerned the welfare of a pashalik, and the next moment

she would descend, with wondrous facility, to some trivial details about the composition of a house-paint, the making of butter, the drenching of a sick horse, the choosing of lambs, or the cutting out of a maid's apron."

All her visitors bear witness to her marvellous conversation. When she was in the mood, she would keep it up for eight or nine hours at a stretch, filling the neglected and littered room with smoke from her chibouque, and pouring out, without a pause, dissertations upon astrology, politics, reminiscences of English society, mimicries of famous persons (Lord Byron's affected lisp or Fox's impassioned pleading at the trial of Warren Hastings), curious information of how Damascus horse-dealers swindle ignorant buyers or about the purchase of attar of roses and sandalwood oil from the pilgrims returning from Mecca with the Hadj. At times she was violent, tyrannical, and cruel, beating her servants with a stick; at others she was gentle, serene, and full of

human solicitude. Sometimes she would break into fierce tempers over the most trivial incident, such as a slave's failure to deliver a bunch of roses to an acquaintance, and the entire establishment would be thrown into confusion and misery for a whole day. Sometimes she was overcome by terrible fits of despair. "To-day," writes Meryon on December 16th, 1837, "she was in very low spirits, and sobbed aloud and wrung her hands, while she bitterly deplored her deserted state. 'I believe it will do me good to cry,' she said, and she gave way freely to her emotions. But her weeping was not woman-like. It had a wild howl about it, that was painful to me to hear; she seemed not to be made of stuff for tears."

No wonder she was seized with despairs, for it seems that her life no longer had any order or any values. As one by one her illusions fell from her, her unsatisfied hunger for a meaning, a centre, a reality in life became as it were panic-stricken and spent itself in explosions of

energy, diffuse, sometimes entirely undirected, like the frantic struggles of a bird caught in a room, that dashes itself against the windows. Yet often, in her calmer moments, her old humorous self would reassert itself. Her lifelong interest in men continued. She was a fine judge of a horse, and, with just the same critical eye for his points, she was accustomed to appraise a man. When Prince Pückler Muskau visited her in 1838 we hear her, even in these last years, noting the beauty of his skin.

She must have presented a strange spectacle in these times. Most of her teeth were gone; she mumbled and talked in a low voice, so that it was sometimes difficult to hear what she said. Though again and again her health revived, her body wasted; she became terribly thin and slightly humpbacked, and her eyes sank deeper and deeper into her head. But her terrific vitality remained. Each of the rare visitors to Dar Djoun remarks upon it, and upon her amazing power of reading character at a

glance. This power she attributed to her knowledge of astrology; she could see a man's star as soon as he stood before her. She spent almost all her time now in her bedroom, turning night into day and day into night, for being a bad sleeper, she got into the habit of sitting up half the night and going to bed only when she was exhausted.

During one period at this time she kept her bed for many weeks. Meryon describes her "lying with her pipe in her mouth, talking on politics, philosophy, morality, religion, or on any other theme, with her accustomed eloquence, and closing her periods with a whiff that would have made the Duchess of Rutland stare with astonishment, could she have risen from her tomb to have seen her quondam friend, the brilliant ornament of a London drawing-room, clouded in fumes so that her features were sometimes invisible. Now, this altered individual had not a covering to her bed that was not burnt into twenty holes by the sparks and

ashes that had fallen from her pipe; and, had not these coverings been all woollen, it is certain that, on some unlucky night, she must have been consumed, bed and all.

"Her bedroom, at the end of every twenty-four hours, was strewed with tobacco and ashes, to be swept away and again strewed as before; and it was always strongly impregnated with the fumes."

From her bed she transacted all her business, summoning the faithful Meryon to her and talking and dictating letters interminably. Under the date of January 30th, 1838, Meryon makes the following entry in the *Memoirs*:

"Lady Hester was still very ill; the convulsive attacks returning now regularly every day. She began to be sensible that fits of passion, however slight, did her injury, and she was more calm for a continuation than I had ever seen her since I had been here. But a fresh occurrence, trifling in its nature, although she

gave much importance to it, excited her anger considerably to-day, and did her mischief in proportion. She had reason to suspect that her secretary had been endeavouring to ascertain whether she was consumptive, and how long she was likely to live. To dispel such a suspicion, she made a great effort, got up, and went and sat in the garden. Before she left her room, her wailings were for some moments heart-rending. 'Oh, God have mercy! oh, God have mercy!' she cried; 'only keep those beasts away; who is to take care of me, surrounded as I am with those horrible servants?—only take care they don't rob me.'

"While she remained in the garden her chamber was put to rights (a process which it much required, in consequence of her long confinement); and, at her earnest request, I superintended the performance. 'Overlook them,' she said, 'or they will rob me.' But oh! what a sight! such dust, such confusion, such cobwebs! Never was a lady's room seen before in such a

condition: bundles, phials, linen, calico, silk, gallipots, clothes, étuis, papers, were all lying about on the floor, and in the corners, and behind and under the scanty furniture; for all this while she had been afraid to get the chamber put into order, lest her servants should take advantage of the opportunity to plunder her.

"When she returned to her room from the garden, she was raving. 'You had better leave me to die,' she cried, 'if I am to die; and, if I am not, oh! God, only let me crawl to my own country' (by her own country she meant Arabia, among the Koreysh), 'and there, with not a rag on me, I may be fed by some good-natured soul, and not such cannibals as these servants! What are they good for? I will be obeyed; and you are not a man, to see me treated in this manner.' "

12

ILL in mind and body, harassed by poverty and debts, driven half frantic by her determination to govern with a rod of iron her household of ungovernable Orientals, the unhappy woman was now to be faced with another torment. A Turkish money-lender from whom, several years earlier, she had borrowed a sum amounting to about £1,000, applied to the English Consul-General in Syria in the hope of forcing a repayment of the debt. The Consul-General applied to the Home Government and was told that they had no right to enforce a payment, since the transaction had been a private one between two individuals. Next year, Lady Hester's creditor made a second appeal and again the Consul-General applied to England, but the Attorney-General, on being consulted, con-

firmed the previous decision. For a third time, two years later, the creditor made his appeal, and the Consul-General (whom Lady Hester had treated, after her usual manner of treating consuls, with rudeness and contempt) wrote a strong letter to England. Palmerston was now in office. He appreciated the uncomfortable and delicate position in which the Consul-General was placed and resolved that something must be done. But what could he do? It was undeniable that her Majesty's Government had no right of interference, and so he conceived the drastic and unwarrantable device of stopping Lady Hester's pension. The Consul-General was instructed to inform her "confidentially" of this proceeding.

Lady Hester was stung to the quick, and broke out in an explosion of letter-writing. Her attitude as regards her debts was unreasonable but, when her peculiar disposition is allowed for, very pardonable. She was deeply in debt, but she had incurred her debts largely in help-

ing the helpless and afflicted. She laid the facts before the Duke of Wellington, telling him how she had housed and fed her hosts of refugees. "These unhappy people," she wrote, "had no resource but me, and I did the best I could for them all. Mahomet Ali, Ibrahim Pasha, Sheriff Pasha, all set at me at once, in order to make me give up certain persons, who immediately would have lost their heads for having fought well in the cause which they were engaged in. I opposed them all round single-handed. . . . Can you, as a brave soldier, blame me for what I have done? I should have acted in the same way before your eyes to the victims of your sword. Then the host of orphans, and widows, and little children, who, to feed or clothe for nearly two years, took away all the ready money with which I ought in part to have paid my debts, and caused new ones! Yet I am no swindler, and will not appear like one. Your Queen had no business to meddle with my affairs. In due time, please God, I should

have known how to arrange to satisfy everybody, even if I left myself a beggar."

The stopping of her pension not only wounded her pride and her sense of her extreme importance; it seemed to her, as indeeed it was, a flagrant injustice. Her anger knew no bounds. She wrote an indignant letter to the young Queen Victoria. "Your Majesty will allow me to say that few things are more disgraceful and inimical to royalty than giving commands without examining all their different bearings, and casting, without reason, an aspersion upon the integrity of any branch of a family who had faithfully served their country and the house of Hanover. . . . I shall not allow the pension given by your royal grandfather to be stopped by force, but I shall resign it for the payment of my debts, and with it the name of English subject, and the slavery that is at present annexed to it."

When Palmerston wrote to her equivocally explaining that what had been done had been

done with the desire to save her embarrassment, he provoked a long and indignant reply. "If your diplomatic despatches," Lady Hester began, "are as obscure as the one which now lies before me, it is no wonder that England should cease to have that proud preponderance in her foreign relations that she once could boast of." Later in the letter she issued her ultimatum. "It is but fair to make your Lordship aware that, if by the next packet there is nothing definitely settled respecting my affairs, and that I am not cleared in the eyes of the world of aspersions intentionally or unintentionally thrown upon me, I shall break up my household and build up the entrance gate to my premises, there remaining, as if I was in a tomb, till my character has been done justice to, and a public acknowledgment put in the papers, signed and sealed by those who have aspersed me. There is no trifling with those who have Pitt blood in their veins upon the subject of integrity, no expecting that their spirit would

ever yield to the impertinent interference of consular authority."

She was confident, if the correspondence on the subject of her pension and debts was published, that there would be universal indignation in England at the treatment she had received. It was impossible for her to realize that England had long since forgotten her, and that it was she herself who was largely responsible for that forgetfulness. When an attempt was eventually made in *The Times* to rouse public opinion, it produced little effect but tolerant amusement.

Her threat to wall herself up in Dar Djoun was not unpremeditated. She had already expressed the same intention to Meryon. "I shall get rid of you and everybody," she had told him, "and of all the women; and, with one black slave and Logmagi, I shall order the gateway to be walled up, leaving only room enough for my cows to go in and out to pasture, and I shall have no communication with any human

being. I shall write to Lord Palmerston before you go, and tell him that, as he has thrown aspersion on my name, I shall remain walled in here until he publicly removes it. And if he, or anybody, writes to me, there will be no answer; for, when you are gone, I shall have nobody to write for me. This sort of life perhaps will suit me best, after all. I have often wished that I could have a room in my garden, and, lying there with only some necessary covering, slip from my bed as I was into my garden, and after a turn or two, slip back again: I do assure you I should neither be low-spirited nor dull."

Even now, in these desperate circumstances, her moments of high spirits and gay and varied conversation did not desert her. One day, when chattering to Meryon about phrenology, she snatched off the turban and fez which she always wore, and told him to examine her shaven head. Her head had been shaved ever since she had adopted the Turkish costume, for only thus can the turban and fez be worn with com-

fort. "She asked me, laughing," says Meryon, "if I could see the thieving propensity strongly marked. Then she said, 'I don't think there are any improprieties; do say!' 'People,' she added, 'have told me the fighting bump is as big as a lion's.'"

When, soon after this, all hopes both of money and of justification from England were definitely at an end, Lady Hester resolved to execute her threat of walling up her gateway. "You can be no longer of any use to me," she said to Meryon, "and therefore had better go as soon as you can, before the bad weather comes on. As for my health, I am as well, I dare say, as I shall be, and nothing that I can take of you European doctors will do me much good; so don't make yourself uneasy on my account. All that remains to do now is to fill up the few days you have left in doing some necessary things for me. Let me see—I must write to the Duke Maximilian, to Count Wilsenheim (and you too had better write to him, or to the

baron, that they may not think you left me unprotected; for you know how apt people are to put bad constructions on everything)—and then there must be a letter to Prince Pückler Muskau, and one to Sir Francis Burdett, besides a short one to Mr. Moore. And then you must pay the servants, and send them away; but that we will talk about afterwards. I shall keep none but the two boys, a man to fetch water, the gardener, and the girls. But you had better go to Sayda, and see about a vessel for carrying you to Cyprus. I should not like you to sail from Beyrout; for those people will be only bothering you about my debts, and at present there is nothing to be said but what has been said already. You must send, too, for a mason to come and wall up the gateway."

For Monday, July 30th, there is the following entry in the *Memoirs*:

"The mason had been sent for from Sayda, and stones and materials had been collected for walling-up the gateway. Lady Hester drew

out on paper the exact manner in which she wished it to be done. It was a screen, which completely masked the gateway, and left a side opening just large enough for a cow or an ass laden with water to enter. I superintended this work of self-inhumation, the like of which never entered woman's mind before. It was an affair of two days, Monday and Tuesday."

On Monday, August 6th, Meryon "took an affectionate leave of her, and never saw her more."

The extracts given by Meryon from Lady Hester's letters to him after his departure are extraordinarily free from depression. Perhaps in the poverty and simplicity of life to which she had at last resigned herself she found something of that repose of spirit which had eluded her for so long. For the most part, the letters deal with practical matters—requests for household utensils to be sent out, information about the state of affairs in the Mountain, talk of the weather and odd bits of news. "There

has been a vast deal of rain this year," she writes in February, 1839; "but not very cold; the house nearly as usual. My cough continues—my spirits the same. A hyena came into the garden the other day, and Ibrahim Beytar killed it with only a bludgeon, and brought me the skin; it is the first wild beast of the kind that has been so daring this winter. The dogs frightened the animal so much on the outside that it scaled the wall."

In March she writes: "I am contented with the violence of my own character; it draws a line for me between friends and enemies." And then: "Will you see that I receive a dozen pair of spectacles like those you wear, six or seven of fine quality, and the others common black ones, but with clear glasses; and a dozen like what I wear—not expensive."

On May 6th, she writes: "Do not keep reproaching yourself about leaving me; it did not depend on you to stay." The letter ends with a postscript: "I have written a sad,

stupid letter, but I have no news—shut up."

"This," writes Meryon, "was the last letter I ever received from her ladyship. She died in June following, slowly wasting away, everybody being in ignorance of her approaching end, except Logmagi and the servants immediately about her. She had no Frank or European near her, and Lunardi, who was coming out to her from Leghorn, reached Beyrout unfortunately too late."

It was on June 23rd that she died. Her age was sixty-three. The Consul at Beyrout, hearing that she was ill, rode over the Mountain with W. M. Thomas, the American missionary, to visit her. "It was evening when they arrived, and a profound silence was over all the palace; no one met them; they lighted their own lamps in the outer court and passed unquestioned through court and gallery, until they came to where she lay." They had arrived too late. Lady Hester was dead.

Thomas, in *The Land and the Book,* tells

how they buried her, in accordance with her wish, in an arbour in the garden. "It was an intensely hot Sabbath in June, 1839; the consul decided that the funeral must take place immediately. This vault in the garden was hastily opened, and the bones of General Lousteneau, or of his son, I forget which—a Frenchman who died there, and was buried in the vault by her Ladyship—were taken out and placed at the head. The body, in a plain deal box, was carried by her servants to the grave, followed by a mixed company, with torches and lanterns, to enable them to thread their way through the winding alleys of the garden. I took a wrong path, and wandered some time in the mazes of these labyrinths. When at length I entered the arbour, the first thing I saw were the bones of the general, in a ghastly heap, with the head on top, having a lighted taper stuck in either eye-socket—a hideous, grinning spectacle. It was difficult to proceed with the service under circumstances so novel and bewildering. . . .

The morning after the funeral the consul and I went round the premises and examined *thirty-five* rooms, which had been sealed up by the vice-consul of Sidon to prevent robbery. They were full of trash. One had forty or fifty oil-jars of French manufacture, old and dusty. Another was crammed with Arab saddles, moth-eaten, tattered, and torn. They belonged to her mounted guard. Superannuated pipe-stems without bowls filled one room. Two more were devoted to medicines, and another to books and papers, mostly in boxes and ancient chests. Nothing of much value was found anywhere."

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